LITERARY LEAVES

OR

PROSE AND VERSE

CHIEFLY WRITTEN IN INDIA

BY

DAVID LESTER RICHARDSON

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ERRATA

VOL. I.

In the last line page 59, for "*scatteerd*" read *scattered*.

In the 17th line from the top of page 131, for "*much simplicity*" read *much of the simplicity*.

VOL. II.

In the 3rd line from the top of page 33 insert the word *with* after the word *remonstrated*.

In the 17th line from the top of page 35, for "*attributed the whole series to him*" read *supposed the whole series to be addressed to him*.

In the last line but one on page 91, for "*after*" read *in*.

In the ninth line of the first sonnet on page 134, for "*nor*" read *or*.

In the 3rd line of 3rd stanza page 185, for "*rebels*" read *revels*.

In the 7th line of the second sonnet on page 188, for "*like*" read *on*.

In the foot-note page 223, for "*character*" read *characters*, and for "*his*" read *their*.

ADDITIONAL ERRATA.

At page 131 line 19 vol. i. for *less successful than him*, read *less successful than that poet*.

At page 275 line 11 vol. ii. for *have any*, read *has any one*.

CONTENTS. VOLUME II.

PROSE.

VERSE.



SHAKESPEARE'S, SONNETS.

[ON THEIR POETICAL MERITS, AND ON THE QUESTION OF TO WHOM ARE THEY ADDRESSED* ?]

At a time when our elder poets are so much studied, and so justly admired, it seems not a little extraordinary that the Sonnets of the immortal Shakespeare should be almost utterly neglected. When alluded to, as they rarely are, by modern critics, it is generally to echo the flippant insolence of Steevens, who asserted that nothing short of the strongest act of parliament could enlist readers into their service. We know, however, that in Shakespeare's life-time, these "sugred sonnets," as Meres quaintly calls them, were in great esteem, and were for a long while far better known than many of the Plays, which fell into comparative disrepute for some time before the author's death, and were not published in a collected form until several years after. Only eleven of the Dramas were printed during the Poet's life. Shakespeare died (on his birth-day, April 23,) in 1616. The first complete edition was printed in 1623, and was the joint speculation of four booksellers; a circumstance from which Malone infers, that no single publisher was at the time willing to risk his money on an entire collection of the plays.

* "An almost impenetrable darkness rests on the question, and no effort has hitherto, in the smallest degree, tended to disperse the gloom."—*Drake.*

A bookseller of the name of Jaggard did not hesitate to publish on his own account, in 1599, the sonnets which appear under the title of "*The Passionate Pilgrim,*" even in defiance of the author, or at all events without consulting his wishes. The collection was so inaccurate and made with so little care, that Marlowe's madrigal, "Come live with me, &c." was included in it as the production of Shakespeare. The unpopularity of Shakespeare's dramatic works, during even the greater part of the 17th century, is another illustration, to be added to a thousand others, of the capriciousness of the public taste. In one hundred years were published only four editions of his plays, and now perhaps, next to the Bible, the exclusive copyright of these works would be more valuable than that of any other publication that has yet appeared.

When we reflect upon the manner in which the plays have been subjected to the fickleness of the public mind, we ought perhaps to be less surprised at the fate of the Sonnets. There are also certain considerations connected with the latter, which may render their present unpopularity a mystery of more easy solution.

In the first place, we must recollect the equivocal nature of their subject, and secondly, the unpopular character of the sonnet as a peculiar form of verse. It is true, that at the time of their original publication, the sonnet was a fashionable species of composition, but it forced its way into notice rather from the great reputation of its cultivators, than from its own actual adaptation to the general taste.

Another cause of their neglect may be discovered in the enmity of Steevens, whose arrogant and tasteless criticisms have had a strange influence over succeeding commentators. Alexander Chalmers observes, that "it is perhaps necessary that some notice should be taken of Shakespeare's poems, in an account of his life and writings, although they have never" (which is not true)

"been favorites with the public;" but all he ventures to add on so insignificant and unworthy a subject is, that the peremptory decision of Mr. Steevens, on the merits of these poems, severe as it is, only amounts to the general conclusion of modern critics! He has also the audacity to pretend, that it is necessary to offer some apology for inserting the poems of William Shakespeare in his voluminous collection of the British Poets! He is bold enough to assert that there *are* "scattered beauties" in the sonnets, "enough, *it is hoped,* to justify their admission" into the same collection, in which Gorbet, Turbeville, Pitt, Yalden, Hughes, Duke, King, Sprat, Walsh and Pomfret, have each an honorable place!

In most of the critical and biographical notices of Shakespeare, a contemptuous silence is observed on the subject of the sonnets; and indeed the mass of readers, at the present day, are not even aware that Shakespeare is the author of a volume of Miscellaneous Poems. Wordsworth, in one of his prefaces to his own poems, (published in 1815,) announces it as an interesting fact, that such a work is extant, and that it is every way worthy of the illustrious Shakespeare. Dr. Drake, however, is the only writer who has taken up the subject with the enthusiasm which every thing connected with that glorious name is so well calculated to awaken. His indefatigable industry, and the genuine love of literature, which he on all occasions exhibits, excite the respect and sympathy of every generous mind. He has contributed more than any other critic with whom I am acquainted to revive these unjustly neglected poems.

A regret has often been expressed that we have little beyond a collection of barren dates in what is called the Life of Shakespeare. Now, I conceive, and in this opinion I do not stand alone, that if any new light is to be thrown on Shakespeare's life and character, it must result from a careful and profound study of these Sonnets. Frederic Schlegel has observed, that it is in these pieces that we are first introduced to a personal knowledge

of the great poet and his feelings. "When he wrote sonnets," he observes, "it seems as if he had considered himself as more of a poet than when he wrote plays; he was the manager of a theatre, and he viewed the drama as his business; on it he exerted all his intellect and power; but when he had feelings intense and secret to express, he had recourse to a form of writing, with which his habits had rendered him familiar. It is strange but delightful to scrutinize, in these short effusions, the character of Shakespeare. For the right understanding of even his dramatic works, these lyrics are of the greatest importance; they show us, that in his dramas he very seldom speaks according to his own thoughts or feelings, but according to his knowledge." This is also the opinion of his celebrated brother Augustus William Schlegel, and I take up a strong position when I shelter myself under such authorities*. Mr. Thomas Campbell, however, has expressed his surprise that the last mentioned critic, "one of the most brilliant and acute spirits of the age," should have made this "erroneous over-estimate of the light derivable from these poems respecting the poet's history." He contends that the facts attested by the sonnets "can be held in a nut-shell;" that they do not unequivocally paint the actual situation of the poet, nor make us acquainted with his passions; nor contain any confession of the most remarkable errors of his youthful years. He does not deny that some slight hints of a personal nature may be gathered from a careful perusal, but he considers these to be grossly exaggerated by the German critic.

* "It betrayed an extraordinary deficiency of critical acumen in the commentators on Shakespeare, that none of them, as far as we know, have ever thought of availing themselves of his Sonnets for tracing the circumstances of his life. These sonnets paint most unequivocally the actual situation and sentiments of the Poet; they enable us to become acquainted with the passions of the man; they even contain the most remarkable confessions of his youthful errors." *Lectures on Dramatic Literature, by Augustus William Schlegel.* The remarks of Frederic Schlegel, are extracted from his *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern.*

Malone and Dr. Drake, are of opinion that the sonnets of Daniel were the prototype of Shakespeare's; andt hough their observations on this subject are not without weight, I am inclined to think that Shakespeare had studied all the sonnet compositions of his predecessors, without constructing his own after any particular standard. Daniel's system is not peculiar to himself; there were other writers, both before and after him, who adopted the same form. As to his turn of expression, though in some respects similar to Shakespeare's, it is not more so than that of his other contemporaries. It was the diction and idiom of the age. Shakespeare not being an Italian scholar, and not therefore acquainted with the strict models, chose the system that was most popular at the time, and which was certainly the most easy to construct, and perhaps the most agreeable to his own ear. That the form of three elegiac quatrains, concluding with a couplet, is infinitely less difficult than the Petrarchan sonnet, and is capable of being rendered highly musical and agreeable in skilful hands, no critic would be willing to dispute; but it is not entitled to the name of sonnet. In the legitimate sonnet, the first eight lines should have but two rhymes, and the concluding six lines should have either two or three rhymes arranged alternately. Shakespeare's fourteen-line effusions are very exquisite little poems, but they are not sonnets, and I only call them such to distinguish them from his longer pieces, and because they are generally recognized by that title.

Some writers have a ridiculous habit of calling every short poem a sonnet, without reference to its precise number of lines or its general construction. They might just as well call a didactic poem an ode; a blank-verse poem a song; or an elegy an epigram. It is uncritical and injudicious to confound the different orders of verse by inappropriate titles.

Many people disapprove entirely of the system of the sonnet as too arbitrary and confined, and compare it to the bed of Pro-

crustes*, which the limbs of the victims laid thereon were made to fit by being either stretched or amputated, as the case required. They object to its being limited to a precise number of lines; as if the same objection might not be made to every other form of verse. The sonnet is one stanza of fourteen lines, as the Spenserian measure is one stanza of nine lines. Some poems have been constructed entirely of sonnet-stanzas†. Though the Spenserian stanza is much shorter, it is generally complete in itself, and the sound and sense are wound up together by the concluding Alexandrine, in a way that fully satisfies both the ear and the mind. Even in eight and four line stanzas there is usually a certain unity and completeness both of thought and music. These laws of verse are not arbitrary or casual, but depend on certain fixed principles, discovered by the intuitive taste and discrimination of genius. Capel Lofft has ingeniously insisted on the perfection of the sonnet construction, and its analogy to music; and has remarked that it is somewhat curious that the two Guidi or Guittonni, both of Arrezzo, the birth-place of Petrarch, were the fathers, the one of the sonnet, and the other of the modern system of musical *notation* and *solmization*. He has proved, at least to my satisfaction, that the sonnet is as complete and beautiful a form of verse as any that has been yet invented. I of course allude to the strict Petrarchan or Guidonian sonnet. The little poems of Bowles and Charlotte Smith are merely elegiac four line stanzas, with a concluding couplet; and though very pretty and pleasing compositions, possess not the charm which they would have acquired by a more rigid adherence to the Italian model. Of later years a more intimate acquaintance with Italian literature

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* It was Ben Jonson who first made use of this now stale comparison; "He cursed Petrarch for redacting verses into sonnets, which he said was like that tyrant's bed, where some who were too short were racked, others too long cut short." But Ben Jonson's taste was not infallible. According to Drummond's report of his conversations "Spenser's stanzas pleased him not, nor his matter," while, "for some things, he esteemed Donne *the first poet in the world*."

† Spenser's "*Ruines of Rome*," and "*Visions of Petrarch*," &c. are examples.

has opened the eyes of our poets to the superior beauty of the legitimate construction. The true Italian sonnet is a labyrinth of sweet sounds. It has all the variety of blank-verse, with the additional charm of rhyme. There is no precise limit to the number or position of the pauses, and the lines may so run over into each other, that the cloying effect of a too frequent and palpable recurrence of the same terminations need never be experienced, if the poet turn his skill and taste to a proper account. The sonnet is not adapted to all subjects, but to those only which may be treated in a small compass. A single sentiment or principle may be expressed or illustrated within its narrow limits with exquisite and powerful effect, but it is not adapted for continuous feeling or complex thought. Pastorini's celebrated sonnet to Genoa, and the equally celebrated sonnet to Italy, by Filicaja, are examples of the capability of the sonnet to give effect to a single burst of feeling or to one pervading idea, suggested by a single scene, or circumstance. Wordsworth, who is the most legitimate and by far the finest sonnet-writer in the English language, since Milton, has produced several perfect specimens of the force and unity of this species of composition. I content myself with adducing one beautiful example.

SONNET.

COMPOSED ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty;
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will;
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

The reader feels as this fine sonnet is wound up with the sublime concluding image, that there is no want of an additional line or an additional illustration. Both the ear and mind are satisfied. The music of thought and the music of verse are exquisitely blended, and seem to arrive together at a natural termination. It reminds me of the Portuguese aphorism, that the sonnet ought to be shut with a golden key. The Italians say that it should be a body of sweetness with a sting, by which they do not mean that its tenderness or beauty should merge into an actual epigram, but that it should end with point and spirit. When a sonnet fails to exhibit a unity and finish, it is the fault of the artist. The question put by George Steevens, in allusion to Shakespeare's sonnets of "*what have truth and nature to do with sonnets?*" is scarcely worthy of an answer. Truth and nature are not confined to any particular form of verse, and may be as well embodied in the 14-line stanza as in any other; they depend on the poet's genius, and not on his choice of metre.

It is true that the sonnet imposes many peculiar difficulties on the poet, but it is his glory to overcome them; and we do not find that bad sonnets necessarily contain more nonsense than 14 lines of bad blank verse*.

* In the notice of Robert Walpole's poetical translations from the Greek, Spanish, and Italian, in the Edinburgh Review, (1805) it is observed that "This species of composition has been called by an excellent writer, *the most exquisite jewel of the Muses*. With us it has never been completely naturalized. Milton and Gray, who have cultivated it with most success, both drank from the sweet streams of Italy, where a single sonnet can give immortality to its author, while the longer poems of his contemporaries are buried in oblivion." In adding that the strict laws of the sonnet ought not to be departed from, the reviewer remarks, "*Gray has observed them scrupulously.*" I cannot understand this prominent notice of Gray as a sonnet-writer. *He wrote only one*, and even that is omitted in Chalmer's collection! Though a very good sonnet, its excellence is by no means extraordinary. Milton's sonnets are unquestionably the best in our language, and possess a severe dignity that may be referred to as a triumphant disproof of the vulgar notion, that this form of verse is necessarily confined to ingenious conceits or maudlin sentiment.

But it is time to draw the reader's especial attention to the sonnets (for such I must call them) of Shakespeare. If I regret their defects as *sonnets*, the truly Shakesperian beauties, with which they are so profusely sprinkled, make me delight in them as *poems*, without any reference to their peculiar class or construction. I shall commence with pointing out what I conceive to be specimens of their poetical merit, and shall afterwards proceed to offer some observations upon the difficult question of *to whom are they addressed*, which seems to have turned the heads of some of the poet's commentators.

Mr. Steevens has asserted, that "*the sonnets are composed in the highest strain of affectation, pedantry, circumlocution and nonsense.*"

Now I shall endeavour to make the reader acquainted with the real nature of the poetry thus spoken of, and then leave him to his indignation and astonishment at such critical blasphemy in one who set himself up as a commentator on Shakespeare and a pretender to taste. Leigh Hunt has well described Steevens as "an acute observer up to a certain point, but who could write like an idiot when he got beyond it." As the chief merit of Shakespeare's fourteen-line stanzas does not consist in their continuity or completeness, but in the freshness, force, beauty and abundance of the thoughts and images, I shall not confine my extracts to entire sonnets, but give occasionally such detached lines and short passages as seem most remarkable, and may be most easily separated from the context. I commence, however, with a complete poem, in which the writer persuades his friend to marry.

"When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tattered weed of small worth held.
Then being asked where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days;
To say within thine own deep sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.

How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer—'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse—'
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new-made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold."

The following lines, in which the same subject is continued, contain one of those vivid images that are flashed from the fancy of the genuine poet only.

"Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time."

The ensuing extract has also much beauty:

"Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely face where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrant to the very same,
And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
For never-resting Time leads summer on
To hideous winter."

Where in any modern poem may we look for such a description of sun-rise as the following? There is a freshness of imagery, a masculine simplicity and strength of diction, and a noble freedom of versification, in this passage, that could hardly be over-praised.

"Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And having climbed the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still
Attending on his golden pilgrimage."

Scarcely less beautiful are the following lines:

"When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;

When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier, with white and bristly beard;
Then of thy beauty do I question make—
That thou among the wastes of time must go!"

There is a tenderness of feeling in the following sonnet, that must touch the coldest reader.

"That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang,
Upon those boughs that shake against the cold
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it doth expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave e'er long."

There is much grace and ingenuity in the following apology for his long silence. The line in Italics is truly exquisite.

"My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming,
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandized, whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in its spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days.
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometimes hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song."

The imagery and the harmony of the first two lines of the sonnet to Time are almost perfect.

TO TIME.

"Oh! carve not with thine hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen."

The pathos and melody of the ensuing sonnet will be immediately acknowledged by every reader of taste and sensibility.

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
Then you shall hear the sullen surly bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell;
Nay if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;
But let your love e'en with my life decay:
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone."

The next brief extract, in which the poet expresses his willingness to bear all the blame of his forced separation from his friend, is equally touching. There is great force in the line in Italics.

"Knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange;
Be absent from thy walks; and on my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell."

There is a freshness and beauty as of vernal breezes and blue skies in the first half of the following sonnet.

"From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.

Yet nor the lays of bird, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose:
They were but sweet, sweet figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those;
Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play."

The following is a fine burst of poetry, and is characterized by that easy force of style, and exuberance of fancy, and that almost miraculous felicity of diction which seem peculiar to this mighty genius. His descriptions of morning come upon us like the dawn itself.

"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."

But instead of particularising in this way the various gems in these sonnets, I will now heap a few more together, and let the reader make his own comments on their beauty.

"Like as the waves make to the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end."

"Great princes' favorites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye:
And in themselves their pride lies buriéd,
For at a frown they in their glory die."

"So flatter I the *swart-complexioned night*."

"Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste:
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning may'st thou taste,
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,
Of *mouthéd graves* will give thee memory;

Thou by thy dial's *shady stealth* may'st know
Time's thievish progress to eternity."

"Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride;
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned;
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you."—

"And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the East,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face."

"O call not me to justify the wrong,
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue."

"Ah! do not when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe."

"*Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye*,
'Gainst which the world can ne'er hold argument," &c.

Those persons to whom I may have the good fortune to introduce Shakespeare as a sonnet-writer, will feel no little surprise at the extreme elegance and accuracy of his verse. There is an occasional smartness, terseness and antithesis in many of his poems, that people are apt to consider peculiar to the moderns. There is a balanced harmony, a point and opposition, in the following couplets, that have not been excelled by Pope or Darwin. And yet they were written *upwards of two centuries ago!*

"The worth of that, is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

I am to wait, though waiting so, be hell;
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds.

For we, that now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him, that so feel sick of you.

Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me;
He plays the whole, and yet I am not free.

For I have sworn thee fair; more perjured I,
To swear, against the truth, so foul a lie.

Come there for cure, and this by that I prove
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope
Being had, to triumph, being lacked, to hope."

After these specimens, to which I could add a thousand others, Johnson's talk about the rude state of English versification before the time of Waller and Pope is worse than foolish. It was disgraceful in a writer who set himself up as the historian of poetry and poets, to pass over the age of Shakespeare in the way he has done.

I have as yet confined myself to a consideration of their poetical merit, but though I do not propose to enter fully into the question at present, I cannot help subjoining a few passages to support Schlegel's position, that much of the poet's personal history and private feelings is revealed in these condemned and neglected sonnets.

The following lines contain an affecting allusion to his profession as an actor, an acknowledgment of his follies, which he no doubt rightly attributes to the influence of his unfortunate circumstances, and an intimation of profound repentance. Pope has observed that " Shakespeare was obliged to please the lowest

of the people, and to keep the worst of company." Chalmers replies to this, that we have nothing but Pope's conjecture on the subject. Now, if Chalmers had only judged for himself, and had not turned from Shakespeare's poems with disdain, because they were not good enough for Mr. Steevens*, he might have met with the ensuing passage, which would have convinced him that Pope was correct in his assertion.

"O, for my sake do you with fortune chide,
The guilty goddess for my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide,
Than *public means*, which *public manners* breeds:
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it *works in* like the *dyer's hand*."

It has been erroneously asserted by many writers on Shakespeare, that he was not conscious of his mighty faculties, and had no anticipation of his future fame. There are numerous passages, that are characterised by a glorious egotism and self-confidence. The following lines bear unanswerably on the point.

"Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in *eternal lines* to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

* A very popular author, distinguished for his knowledge of literary history, has done me the honour to read the first edition of this work, and in an interesting and most obliging private letter, communicates the following characteristic notice of Steevens. -

"These sonnets have had a singular fate since Steevens declared that nothing short of an act of Parliament was necessary to compel us to read them, and he boldly as impudently rejected them from the works of Shakespeare. As Steevens was not deficient in critical judgment, and was a malicious wag, whenever he had his friend and rival Malone in view, this false and ridiculous decision may have been only one of the many unfair tricks or traps which he laid to catch his brother commentator. Boswell told me of several which had only originated in this mischievous Puck, who when he had beguiled some innocent into the mire, always screamed in laughter."

And let me add one more example.

> " *Not marble nor the gilded monuments*
> *Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme.*"

Some of the sonnets, however, that appear to have been written in his youth, and before he had gained his reputation, are as full of graceful humility and a reverential regard for others, as his later productions are of a just and noble confidence in his own pretensions.

> " If thou survive my well contented day,
> When that churl death my bones with dust shall cover,
> And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
> These *poor rude lines* of thy deceased lover;
> Compare them with the bettering of the time,
> And though they be *outstripped by every pen*,
> Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
> Exceeded by the height of happier men."

> " O! how I faint when I of you do write,
> Knowing a *better spirit* doth use your name."

This " better spirit" is supposed by some to be Spenser; but though Spenser is also alluded to by name in the *Passionate Pilgrim*, and with great praise, " the better spirit" is thought by other critics, and not without reason, to be Daniel, who had then a high reputation.

Leigh Hunt thinks that we may gather from the sonnets that Shakespeare was lame*. I suppose he alludes to the following passage, but it is perhaps doubtful whether it should be interpreted literally or not.

> " As a decrepit father takes delight
> To see his active child do deeds of youth,
> *So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite*,
> Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth;
> For whether beauty, birth, or wealth or wit,

* It is strange how many poets have been lame—Tyrtæus—Shakespeare—Akenside—Darwin—Anna Seward—Scott—Byron—Pringle, &c. &c.

Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in my parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to thy store:
So then I am not *lame*, poor, nor despised."

There is a passage in another sonnet of a similar description to he third line of the above extract.

"Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence:
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence."

Sir Walter Scott introduces Shakespeare into his Kenilworth with an allusion to his lameness :—" He is a stout man at quarter staff, and single falchion, though I am told, a *halting* fellow."

The fortieth sonnet shows that he was accustomed to travel on horseback, and that when vexed by his steed's dulness, notwithstanding his own sweetness and gentleness of nature, he could not help " provoking him on" with " the bloody spur,"

"That sometimes anger thrust into his hide."

He adds, however, that the groan of the poor animal was

"More sharp to me than spurring to his side."

These sonnets also prove that he was a warm friend and a passionate lover. Indeed, considering that he was a married man, and a father, it must be confessed that his extravagant love for a notoriously low and licentious woman (Campbell calls her a *married* woman, though I recollect no passage in the sonnets that exactly justifies him in so describing her) certainly throws a shade upon his moral character. His thinking it necessary to publish and immortalize the matter, makes it a thousand times worse.

Shakespeare married at eighteen. His wife was eight years older. It is supposed that she did not contribute to his domestic

happiness*. One of his biographers imagines that he was *jealous;* but this is scarcely probable, I think, considering that he did not take his wife with him to London, but lived at a distance from her for many years. It is certain, that he neglected her in his will, in which her name was at first wholly omitted, and subsequently inserted with the bequest of only "*his second best bed.*" That he was unfaithful to her, is, I fear, pretty clearly proved by some of these Confessional Sonnets, which seem to correspond in their character with a scandalous anecdote lately discovered by Mr. Payne Collier. Burbidge the actor, while playing Richard the Third, struck the fancy of a fair citizen, who appointed him to call upon her under the name of Richard the Third. Shakespeare overheard the assignation, and forestalled poor Burbidge. When the latter arrived and sent in his name, Shakespeare sent word back that *William the Conqueror* was before Richard the Third. He was suspected of the paternity of Davenant, and when the latter was telling some one that he was going to his *God*-father Shakespeare, he was cautioned not to take *God's* name in vain. Such gossiping and doubtful anecdotes as these, are perhaps scarcely worth repeating: but such is our eager interest in the slightest details connected with Shakespeare, that we cannot help treating them with more consideration than they really merit.

I now come to the consideration of the question of *to whom are these Sonnets addressed;* a mystery which has puzzled the critics as much as that of the authorship of Junius. Hazlitt acknowledges, in his occasionally familiar way, that of the "ultimate drift" of the sonnets, he can "make neither head nor tail." Thomas Campbell is also puzzled, and remarks that it seems almost impossible to make out to whom they are addressed. Even the Schle-

* I believe Thomas Campbell in his edition of Shakespeare's Plays, in one volume, has stated that the Dramatic bard's first child was born about six months after his marriage with Anne Hathaway.

gels have not attempted, I believe, to settle this point, though so indignant at the contemptuous neglect with which the sonnets have been treated by the poet's various biographers. The question might seem of less importance if it were not for the very peculiar character of several of these little poems, which from the want of some positive information in this respect are perfect riddles. It is well known that the smaller collection of sonnets and other short lyrical pieces, which first appeared in 1599, was published by an ignorant and unprincipled bookseller of the name of Jaggard, without the author's sanction. In a public letter of Thomas Heywood's to his own bookseller, Mr. Nicholas Okes, he alludes to this surreptitious publication, and observes, "The author I know is much offended with M. Jaggard, that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name." Now, though we have no direct evidence that the larger collection of sonnets, respecting the object of which there has been so much conjectural criticism, was also published in defiance or without the knowledge of the author, I cannot help thinking there is very good reason for supposing this to have been the case, when we consider the imperfect and unsatisfactory manner in which the work was edited. The poems of *Venus and Adonis*, ("the first heir of his invention,") published in 1593, and *The Rape of Lucrece*, published in 1594, were evidently superintended by the author, who dedicated both of them to his celebrated patron the Earl of Southampton; but it is difficult to imagine that Shakespeare himself had any thing to do with the first edition of the larger collection of sonnets, which are dedicated with singular inelegance and ambiguity by the publisher to no one knows whom. It is strange that no critic (at least none with whom I am acquainted) has looked upon the publication in this point of view; for though this hypothesis does not enable us to reconcile or explain the many contradictions and mysteries with which the collection abounds as it now

stands, yet it is reasonable in itself, and suggests the justice and propriety of our attributing much that is confused or objectionable in the selection and arrangement of the contents to a want of judgment in the publisher. The dedication to which I have already alluded is printed as follows, in the first edition:

"To. The. onlie. begetter. of.
These. insuing. Sonnets.
Mr. W. H. all. Happinesse.
And. that. eternitie.
Promised.
By.
Our. ever-living. Poet.
Wisheth.
The. well-wishing.
Adventurer. in.
Setting.
Forth.

T. T."

The commentators have taxed their utmost ingenuity to discover who this W. H. can be. Dr. Farmer supposes that the sonnets are addressed to William Harte, the poet's nephew; but this has since been discovered to be impossible, as he was not born before the year 1600, and the sonnets were published in 1609, and some of them are known to have been written and circulated amongst the author's private friends several years before. Meres praises these "sugred sonnets" in his "Wit's Treasury," published in 1598. The first seventeen were written to persuade the object of them to marry, and it is absurd to suppose they were addressed to a little child, as Harte must then have been. Besides which, he was of humble birth and pretensions, whereas there are innumerable passages in the sonnets that plainly allude to a patron and friend of distinguished rank and influence. Mr. Tyrwhitt once pointed out to Mr. Malone a line in the 20th sonnet, which induced the latter to believe that W. H. stands for William Hughes.

"A man in *hew*, all *Hews* in his controlling—"

The name of *Hughes* was formerly written *Hews*. To this person Mr. Malone says that it is probable the first 126 sonnets are addressed, and the remaining 28 to a lady. The play upon the author's own Christian name in the 135th and 143rd sonnets seems in accordance with this notion—

"Let no unkind, no fair beseeches kill;
Think all but one; and me in that one Will."

"So will I pray that thou may'st have thy Will."

It may be observed, by the way, that these truly contemptible puns and equivoques in a species of composition that was not addressed to a mixed circle like the author's dramas, of which the occasional bad taste has hitherto been thought an unwilling sacrifice to the "groundlings," seem to prove an early and innate propensity to sins of this description. But no poet is perfect. The 20th sonnet, in which the word *Hews* occurs, is the most puzzling and inexplicable of the whole series. I would extract it entire, if it did not appear objectionable on the score of decency. If I understand it rightly, of which I am very far from being certain, it is in every respect a disgrace to the name of Shakespeare. (And yet how can we know that it is really his?) The reverend Mr. Dyce, the editor of a new edition of these poems, praises Mr. Tyrwhitt's "ingenuity" in the conjectures concerning Mr. Hughes, but without much cause. It is not certain that Shakespeare in this case intends to commit a pun on a name, because the word *hew* in Shakespeare's time, as Dr. Drake observes, meant *mien* and *appearance*, as well as *tint*, and it is possible that the poet is playing on the different meanings. Who is W. Hughes? "*A* Mr. Hughes," as Mr. Dyce calls him;—he seems created for the occasion. He is a name and nothing else. Is it likely that such a person, of whom no one has heard, was the great patrician patron of our immortal bard? and is it possi-

ble that he should have been addressed by Shakespeare in such lines as the following?

"Thou, that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring."

"Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Called to that audit by *advised respects*;
Against that time, when thou shalt *strangely pass*,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye;
When love converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of *settled gravity*."

The following passages evidently allude to one who was the observed of all observers, the object of more than one complimentary Muse, and the patron of the learned.

"So oft have I invoked thee for my muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse,
As every alien pen hath got my use,
And under thee their poetry disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the *learned's* wing,
And given grace a double majesty."

"And having thee, of all men's pride I boast."

It is, I think, pretty clear, that "*A* Mr. Hughes" is not the person who was "all men's pride," and who gave "grace a double majesty." But if Tyrwhitt and Malone fell into the error of giving Shakespeare a patron and a subject somewhat too humble and obscure, Mr. George Chalmers has made a very opposite mistake, and in his anxiety to find a sufficiently dignified object for the poet's praise and gratitude has fixed upon royalty itself. He insists upon it that *the whole series* of sonnets (154) is addressed to Queen Elizabeth! To those who are familiar with the sonnets, and the palpable indications of many of them being

ddressed to a *male* object, this opinion seems too ridiculous to be ·eceived with any other answer than a laugh. I have gone hrough the sonnets with great attention, to satisfy myself as) the sex of the object or objects of them, and the following re some of the many passages which I found glaringly opposed) the notion of Mr. Chalmers :

"Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest,
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless *some mother*." *Son.* 3.

"Is it for fear to wet a *widow's* eye
That thou consumest thyself in single life? *Son.* 9.

———" Dear my love, you know
You had a *father; let your son say so*." *Son.* 13.

"Now stand you on the top of happy hours;
And many *maiden* garlands yet unset,
With virtuous wish *would bear you living flowers*." *Son.* 16.

"O carve not with thine hours my love's fair brow,
And draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow,
For beauty's pattern to succeeding *men*." *Son.* 19.

"Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage—" *Son.* 26.

"The region cloud hath masked *him* from me now,
Yet *him* for this my love no whit disdaineth." *Son.* 33.

"Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;
And when a woman woos, what woman's *son*
Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed?
Ah me! but yet thou mightest, my sweet, forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forced to break a two-fold truth;
Her's by thy beauty tempting *her to thee*,
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me." *Son.* 41.

"*Beauteous and lovely youth,*
When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth." *Son.* 44.

"*His* beauty shall in these black lines be seen." *Son.* 63.

"Ah! wherefore with imperfection should he live,
And with *his* presence grace impiety,
That sin by *him* advantage should achieve,
And lace itself with his society?" *Son.* 67.

"Thus is *his* cheek the map of outworn day." *Son.* 68.

"Nothing, *sweet boy*, &c." *Son.* 108.

"O! thou, my *lovely boy*, who in thy power—" *Son.* 126.

Queen Elizabeth must have been an old woman (about 64) when she was thus addressed by Shakespeare, according to Mr. George Chalmers, as his "*sweet boy!*" The W. H. of the dedication, and the perpetual allusions to a male object, are no obstacles to our critic, who does not even hesitate to *unsex* the Queen for the sake of his ingenious speculation. He supposes that the masculine phrases were addressed to her in her character of sovereign! Some of the sonnets that have a female object are any thing but complimentary; and if they were really addressed to Elizabeth, either prove her majesty to have been a base and licentious woman, or William Shakespeare to have been guilty of a gross and malicious libel on a "Virgin Queen."

"In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds."

"For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night."

"Oh! how I love what others do abhor."

He calls her also in different sonnets, "his false plague," his "female evil," his "colored ill," and accuses her of "seducing his friend."

Absurd as is the conjecture of Mr. George Chalmers, there has been no want of mad or careless critics to keep him in coun-

tenance. The early editors, Gildon and Sewell, both maintained that the whole collection is addressed to a female!

Some of the commentators have been puzzled by the *amatory* character of the expressions unequivocally applied in many instances to a male object. But it should be remembered, that in the age of Shakespeare there was very little distinction between the ordinary expressions of love and friendship. The latter frequently bordered on the strongest language of the former. Warton observes, that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there were published entire sets of sonnets devoted to the record of a species of tender attachment beween male friends, which, though wholly free from any direct impurity of expression or open immodesty of sentiment, would not be tolerated in these days. He alludes, as an instance, to the "*Affectionate Shepherde*" of Richard Barnfielde, printed in 1595, in a series of twenty "not inelegant sonnets," which were exceedingly popular. The poet bewails his unsuccessful love for a beautiful youth, in "a strain of the most tender passion, yet with professions of the chastest affection." The meaning attached to the ardent phrases that are now confined to the intercourse of sexual passion, is not to be given by the modern reader to the same expressions in some of our elder writers. It will be generally admitted, however, that the revolution in our language in this respect is a very pleasant and proper one; and it cannot be denied that in too much of the poetry of the 15th and 16th centuries the effect of great originality, force, and beauty of imagery and thought, is often injured by the disagreeable feeling, bordering on disgust, with which we encounter expressions, that however customary and decorous in the olden time, have acquired an air of indelicacy in consequence of the great change that has since occurred in their meaning and their mode of application.

Dr. Drake has entered into a very elaborate, and certainly a very ingenious and plausible disquisition, 'to prove that the first

one hundred and twenty-six of the sonnets are addressed to Lord Southampton*. I think, however, that I have discovered various reasonable objections to this hypothesis. The first seventeen sonnets, which so strongly urge the poet's friend to marry, could scarcely have been addressed to Lord Southampton, because that nobleman, then not quite 22 years of age, assiduously courted Mrs. Vernon in 1595, (about 14 years before the sonnets were published, and three years before they were alluded to by Meres† as being in private circulation amongst the poet's friends,) and he married her (his marriage having been delayed by the interference of Queen Elizabeth) in 1599. In the next place almost the only praise bestowed on the object of these sonnets is that of extraordinary beauty, and I do not recollect that Lord Southampton has been celebrated for the wonderful perfection of his face or person, though if his portrait in Malone's Shakespeare be authentic, he was not uncomely‡. His wit and learning, however, are indisputable, and were warmly eulogized by Chapman, Brothwate, Nash, and other contemporary writers; but throughout the 126 sonnets, supposed to be dedicated to his merits, it is remarkable that there are but two allusions to any mental qualities.

The first of the following quotations almost implies a want of mind, or at all events that the world gave the object of the sonnet no credit for mental endowments, though his personal beauty was generally admitted.

> "Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view,
> Want nothing that the thoughts of hearts can mend :

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* H proposes to reverse the initials W. H. and make them stand for *Henry Wriothesly*, Earl of Southampton.

† It is *possible* that Meres may have alluded to the sonnets in the *Passionate Pilgrim*, published in 1599. Leigh Hunt has fallen into a mistake, in supposing that the 154 sonnets were not published till after the poet's death.

‡ His features were at all events *masculine*, but in the 20th sonnet the poet exclaims :

> "*A woman's face*, with nature's own hand painted,
> Hast thou, the *master-mistress* of my passion."

All tongues (the voice of soul) give thee that due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward, thus with outward praise is crowned;
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,
In other accents do this praise confound;
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown,
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, *they measure by thy deeds;*
Then (churls) *their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,*
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
To solve is this,—that thou dost common grow." *Son.* 69.

The next passage, however, is an acknowledgment, though on the part of the poet only, of his possessing mental excellence. He does not hint that this praise will be confirmed by the opinion of others.

"*Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue.*" *Son.* 82.

But even this compliment may have been extorted from the writer, by the reproaches of his friend, who it appears was inordinately fond of praise, and no doubt felt somewhat piqued at the absence of all allusion to the qualities of his mind.

"I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set.
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt:
And therefore have I slept in your report;
This silence for my sin you did impute." *Son.* 83.

"You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond of praise." *Son.* 84.

"Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowest thy estimate." *Son.* 87.

This last line seems to be a strange mode of address to a respected nobleman and the poet's patron! If the object of the sonnets was intellectually gifted, and it was thought desirable to please and compliment him, it would seem that mental endowments must

have been of minor importance in the poet's estimation, and beauty every thing, even in a man. As I observed before, in only two places in 126 sonnets, or 1764 lines, supposed to be devoted to eulogiums on a single male character, is there any allusion to his mind; while almost every line conveys some compliment to his exterior charms. Had he been distinguished for any other qualification than his pretty looks, I think Shakespeare was not the man to have done injustice to his merits. Even his moral character appears as doubtful as his intellectual.

In sonnet 33, he says, that as "full many a glorious morning" has permitted

"The basest clouds to ride,
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
E'en so my sun one early morn did shine,
With all triumphant splendour on his brow;
But out! alack! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain, when Heaven's sun staineth."

This surely implies something infamous in his conduct. But the subject is continued in the ensuing lines:

"'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the *disgrace*,
Nor can thy *shame* give physic to my grief." *Son.* 34.

In sonnet 35 the poet exhorts him to be no longer grieved at what he has done, for, "roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;" and in sonnet 95, he again alludes to his faults, and exclaims,

"O! what a mansion have those *vices* got
Which for their habitation chose out thee!
Where *beauty's veil* doth cover every blot,
And all things turn to fair, that eyes can see."

Is this the style in which Shakespeare would have addressed his distinguished patron?

It affords another very strong presumption against the notion that Lord Southampton was the object of so many of these sonnets by the greatest of our English poets, that his remarkable personal bravery, his many and strange duels, and the numerous striking circumstances of his life are in no instance in the slightest degree alluded to, though one would think that they must naturally have occurred to the mind of his friend and admirer, when collecting topics of sympathy or eulogium. It is to be observed also, that between the ages of Shakespeare and Southampton there was only a difference of about nine years, and yet the poet alludes to the *autumn* of his own life and the *spring* of the object of the sonnets. The last sonnet, in the number supposed to be addressed to a male, speaks of him as a "*lovely boy.*"

I find myself in some two or three particulars forestalled in these objections to Dr. Drake's hypothesis by a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September and October, 1832. My notes on this subject, however, though not published, were printed as memoranda for my own use (on a few slips of paper only) at the *Bengal Hurkaru* Office, in Calcutta, at least four years ago, and I have still some of the proofs in my possession*. I do not wish to deduct from the merit of the writer alluded to, but to protect myself from the charge of plagiarism on account of a mere coincidence of opinion. The contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* has endeavoured to prove, in a very shrewd and able paper, that Lord Southampton is *not* the person addressed in the first 126 sonnets, and that the real object of them is Mr. William Herbert, subsequently third Earl of Pembroke.

I dare not encroach on the reader's patience with a regular analysis of the writer's argument. I admire his sagacity and acute-

* The present article appeared in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, April 5, 1834.

ness, and I admit that many of his illustrations tell with great effect; but yet I am by no means satisfied that he has solved the riddle, which has perplexed and wearied so many learned heads. I must just briefly state that he places considerable stress on the following facts. The initials in the dedication may apply to the name of W. Herbert, while they cannot be applied to H. Wriothesly (Earl of Southampton), except by an unjustifiable transposition. The first also was eminently handsome, and therefore worthy of the praises lavished on the beauty of the object of the sonnets. Lord Southampton, was in this respect not remarkable. The difference between the ages of Herbert and Shakespeare agrees better with certain passages in the sonnets, than that between Lord Southampton and the poet. The notice of "a better spirit," who interfered with our great poet's influence with his patron, alludes to Daniel (a highly celebrated and popular poet at that time), who it is known had *dedicated* to William Herbert, whereas Spenser, erroneously supposed to be alluded to, did *not* dedicate to Herbert. From these and other "united proofs" as he calls them, the writer conceives that "the question to whom Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed, is now decided*."

I shall state some of my reasons for still remaining sceptical on this intricate question. The Earl of Pembroke, though certainly a patron of Shakespeare, was not so generally known as such, as Lord Southampton was, and the sonnets frequently allude to the "*public kindness* shown to the poet." Lord Southampton *is said*

* Mr. B. Heywood Bright, in the October number of the Gentleman's Magazine, in which the second part of J. B.'s article appears, put forth a claim to the merit of the same supposed discovery. He says that in 1819, he had convinced himself by laborious researches that W. Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, was the person to whom Shakespeare addressed 126 of the Sonnets. A friend, whom he refers to (Mr. Joseph Hunter), acknowledges that this hypothesis was communicated to him "many years ago." He (Mr. Bright) was warned, he says, that by delaying the publication he was putting to hazard an honorable opportunity of securing to himself some literary reputation, but was prevented by more pressing pursuits, from preparing his notes for publication.

to have presented him with the munificent gift of a thousand pounds, a sum at that period equal to five thousand pounds in the present day. This large donation is supposed to have been bestowed on Shakespeare in the decline of his life, to enable him to purchase "New Place" at Stratford, when he was about to retire from public life. So early as 1594, in the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece*, the poet not merely *dedicates* his *book*, but observes, "*the* LOVE *I dedicate to your Lordship, is without end.*" He also adds, "WHAT I HAVE DONE IS YOURS, WHAT I HAVE TO DO IS YOURS; BEING PART IN ALL I HAVE DEVOTED YOURS*." Is it likely that his noble patron, who appears to have favored him with such warm friendship and generous assistance from the commencement of the poet's career to its close, should have been thus indirectly slighted or insulted, as he must have been if the sonnets, which are often expressive of such *exclusive* friendship, gratitude, and duty, were addressed to Herbert?

In the account by the Oxford Historian, A. à Wood, of the life and character of the Earl of Pembroke, he is described as "learned, and endowed to admiration with a *poetical genie*, as by those amorous and not inelegant Aires and Poems of his composition doth evidently appear; some of which had musical notes set to them by Henry Lawes." And Lord Clarendon speaks of him as a man "of excellent parts and a graceful speaker upon any subject, having a good proportion of learning and a ready wit to apply it and enlarge upon it." Can it be supposed that Shakespeare would have dedicated 126 sonnets to the praise of a poet without a single allusion to his genius? Shakespeare knew too well the nature of the commendation which a poet most dearly covets, to have been guilty of so offensive an omission. When

* Dr. Drake has inadvertently omitted to notice these expressions, which would have told strongly in support of his own speculation. I am surprised that D'Israeli, with his passion for literary research, has not paid attention to this subject.

Meres alluded to the "sugared sonnets" William Herbert was a boy of about 15 years of age, and it is difficult indeed to suppose that Shakespeare should have addressed a series of sonnets to such a youngster, calling upon him most earnestly to marry and leave behind him an image of his beauty. The person addressed is even somewhat severely remonstrated for remaining in a state of "single blessedness."

> "*Be not self-willed*, for thou art much too fair
> To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir." *Son.* 9.

> "*For shame!* deny that thou bearest love to any
> Who for thyself art so improvident." *Son.* 10.

I would draw another argument against both Dr. Drake and the Magazine writer (who signs himself J. B.—is it John Bowring?) from the inconsistent and contradictory character of the dedication. The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that Shakespeare had nothing to do with the publication of the sonnets. It is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that some of the sonnets are addressed to a male object, and others to a female. But the dedication is addressed to a single individual, who is described as the "only begetter" of them. There has been a great deal of quibbling upon the word "*begetter*," some critics insisting that it means the *obtainer*, and others the *object* or *inspirer*. For my own part, I think it means the obtainer, for this seems the most easy and natural interpretation, and is attended with the fewest difficulties, though it partly nullifies much of the ingenious conjectural criticism of both Dr. Drake and J. B. The sonnets having been some years in circulation amongst the author's friends, we ought not to be surprised that they should at last have found their way into print without his sanction. The assertion that the person who gave or sold them to the bookseller is the *only* obtainer of them is a bookseller's boast, precisely in the same style as that of many of our book-advertisements in the present day.

If Shakespeare had had any thing to do with the superintendence of the publication, he would hardly have allowed himself to be styled "*our ever living poet;*" or supposing that the practice of the age might have carried off the appearance of any peculiar impropriety in such a puff direct from his own bookseller, it is not to be credited for a moment that he would have left it to a mere trader to dedicate his work to either of his high and noble patrons. Shakespeare did not bring out his two first poems in this way. They were openly inscribed to his great patron, not giving him the sneaking and disrespectful address of *Mr. W. H.* but his full rank, *The Right Honourable Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield.* That the whole of the 154 sonnets cannot have been exclusively addressed to one individual will admit of no reasonable doubt; and yet if we are to believe that the dedication was addressed to Mr. W. H. as the sole *object* of the sonnets, the dedicator committed an egregious blunder. Is it likely that such a blunder would have been passed over by the eye of Shakespeare? The bookseller's application of the term *adventurer* to himself seems an additional indication that the risk and responsibility of the speculation were exclusively his own.

It is impossible in Calcutta to obtain *every* work that would be useful in literary inquiries of this nature, but I have had the good fortune to fall in with several books and separate essays in Magazines bearing reference to the present subject, and have been surprised that the dedication of the sonnets should have been (as it appears to me) invariably misunderstood, and that no doubts should ever have been expressed as to the authenticity of the first edition of these poems. Every one knows that Shakespeare was careless to a fault in these matters, and though he once expressed to a friend his anger at the insolence of a bookseller who published his *Passionate Pilgrim* without giving any notice to the author, the latter seems to have been more annoyed at the

introduction into the volume of certain poems of his contemporaries under his name, than at the liberty taken with his own productions. His plays were repeatedly published in a surreptitious and most inaccurate and disgraceful manner, but it does not appear that he ever took any steps to check a system of piracy so much calculated to injure his reputation. Any other author would have sunk under the accumulated blunders and nonsense of his editors. But though it appears pretty clear to my apprehension that W. H. in the dedication cannot be the "*only*" subject of the sonnets, I am not sure that *some* of them may not have been addressed to him; and as he was probably one of the private friends amongst whom the *whole* of the sonnets circulated, his vanity might have prompted him to give copies of them to the bookseller, that he might see the ones addressed to himself in a printed collection.

The bookseller, in his eagerness and ignorance, perhaps misunderstood the "*begetter*" or obtainer, and attributed the whole series to him, instead perhaps of some half a dozen. He accordingly mingled them altogether under one head, and occasioned that inextricable confusion which has since been the cause of so much painful and despairing research. If Shakespeare had had any thing to do with the edition, I think he would have dedicated the work in an open manner to his faithful friend and munificent patron (his earliest and his latest), Lord Southampton, and that he would have taken care so to divide and arrange the sonnets, and to indicate the subjects, so as to have made them intelligible to the reader. As they now stand, abstracting their poetical merit, they are nothing but a painful puzzle. It is perhaps worth while observing, that the evidently authentic editions of the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece* were both dedicated to the same patron, Lord Southampton, and both published by the same bookseller, Richard Field; but the spurious edition of the *Passionate Pilgrim* was dedicated to no one, and published by Jag-

gard, and the (as I suppose) spurious edition of the sonnets was dedicated to two initials, W. H. preceded by a *Mr.* and published by T. T. (Thomas Thorpe), who I suspect was a bookseller of "no very good repute."

It may be thought by some readers that I have entered into this discussion rather too minutely, but I confess that, I have reluctantly checked myself from entering into a still more elaborate consideration of what I esteem a highly interesting literary question.

It is, I think, pretty evident, notwithstanding the extreme neglect which has hitherto attended these sonnets, that they are now gradually emerging from their long obscurity. Within these last eight years, several new editions have been published. In 1825, Mr. Pickering published an edition of Shakespeare's Poems, but without a single note or comment or a single line of preface, and the typography is not particularly correct. Some time, in 1831, Mr. Moxon (a young and enterprising publisher of great taste, and himself a writer of sonnets), published an edition of Shakespeare's and Milton's sonnets together in one volume. This is said to be a beautiful edition, very handsomely printed (one sonnet on each page,) but I have not seen a copy. I believe it is without notes. Mr. Pickering, besides his edition of 1825, published in 1832, an edition which is included in the Aldine edition of the British Poets, a very tasteful collection. This last edition of Shakespeare's poems is finely printed on good paper, but the sonnets are inelegantly crowded, and in consequence of the glossarial foot notes of various length, are very unequally divided, which is particularly objectionable in the appearance of so short and compact a form of verse. This defect is not in keeping with the general elegance of the Aldine editions.

Shakespeare himself had a high opinion of his own sonnets, which he appears to have thought would secure to himself and

the several objects of them an immortal fame. And this is another reason why it is improbable that he had any concern in their publication, for as it is clear that he intended to immortalize his friends, he would never have arranged the sonnets in so obscure a style as to leave the objects of them to be guessed at.

Shakespeare somewhere styles the sonnet the "*deep-brained sonnet.*" Wordsworth says,

> "Scorn not the sonnet, Critic; you have frowned
> Mindless of its just honours; *with this key*
> *Shakespeare unlocked his heart!*"

Throughout the whole series of sonnets our great poet makes not a single allusion to his dramas. He edited two separate volumes of his poems, but not one edition of his plays. In fact he was best known by his minor poems, which were very popular. His first two poems went through six editions in thirteen years, while during the same period, Romeo and Juliet (his most popular play) passed through the press but twice.

The following are the conclusions I have arrived at in my own mind. The sonnets were incorrectly arranged by an ignorant bookseller—they were addressed to several individuals, male and female, in some cases real and in others imaginary—some of them were possibly written in the character of Lord Southampton to the "faire Mrs. Vernon," (afterwards his wife,) and some in the character of that lady to her lover—some were written in the poet's own character*, and perhaps the two or three of them which it must be admitted are in many respects objectionable, were not the production of Shakespeare, but of some unknown and inferior author.

* The passages that I have quoted as illustrative of the poet's circumstances and feelings, are, I think, amongst those that are written in his own character.

NOTE.

Since the first edition of the *Literary Leaves*, and the appearance of the article by J. B. in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Mr. Charles Armitage Brown has published a work on Shakespeare's Sonnets. He has divided the whole series, which he looks upon rather as connected Stanzas than as separate Sonnets, into six different poems; and as they contain incidental revelations of the poet's own condition, he has called them *Shakespeare's Auto-Biographical Poems*, which forms the leading title of his book. This original fancy at first surprized and interested me exceedingly, but on turning again to the Sonnets to see how far the matter and manner corresponded with Mr. Brown's divisions, I confess that I could discover more boldness and ingenuity in his arrangement than accuracy or truth. The following is the order of the Sonnet-poems according to Mr. Brown's scheme.

First Poem.—Stanzas 1 to 26.—*To his friend, persuading him to marry.*

Second Poem.--Stanzas 27 to 55.—*To his friend, who had robbed the poet of his mistress, forgiving him.*

Third Poem.—Stanzas 56 to 77.—*To his friend, complaining of his coldness, and warning him of life's decay.*

Fourth Poem.—Stanzas 78 to 101.—*To his friend, complaining that he prefers another poet's praises, and reproving him for faults that may injure his character.*

Fifth Poem.—Stanzas 102 to 126.—*To his friend, excusing himself for having been some time silent, and disclaiming the charge of inconstancy.*

Sixth Poem.—Stanzas 127 to 152.—*To his mistress, on her infidelity.*

Now only the first seventeen Sonnets of the first division have any allusion whatever to the subject of marriage. The remaining nine are merely general expressions of admiration and regard. The 20th Sonnet is one of the most painful and perplexing I ever read. It is a truly disagreeable enigma. If I have caught any glimpse of the real meaning, I could heartily wish that Shakespeare had never written it; but the Sonnets are so involved in mystery with respect to the object of them, that it would be presumptuous and unreasonable to speak disrespectfully of such a man as Shakespeare, on account of any thing that may wear an objectionable aspect in such very uncertain indications of his moral character.

I can discover no greater break or suspension between the 26th and 27th Sonnet than there is between any two of the last nine of the first division. Certainly the 27th does not look like the commencement of a fresh series, nor does it include any allusion whatever to the poet's having been "*robbed of his mistress.*" It is of the same general tenor as the nine immediately preceding Sonnets. In the sixth division Mr. Brown acknowledges, that there are two Sonnets that are not in keeping with the rest, and very coolly tells us that "*these two Stanzas should be expunged from the poem.*"

But though Mr. Brown has not, I think, succeeded, in proving that the Sonnets should be divided as he proposes, he has shown a continuity of subject and sentiment in a great number that was probably never before observed; and his book is altogether an interesting performance, and well worthy of the respectful attention of all admirers of Shakespeare. I should not omit to mention that Mr. Brown is of the same opinion as Mr. Heywood Bright and J. B. in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, to neither of whom, however, he makes any allusion, and it is therefore to be presumed that he had not heard of their labours in the same field. Perhaps the most striking part of his publication is the attempt to show from the internal evidence of his plays, that the great poet must have visited Italy. Nothing, however, is absolutely proved, though much pleasing speculation is very ingeniously supported. It is perhaps too late to look out for the discovery of any new facts in the history of Shakespeare. We are still obliged to confess with Steevens, that all that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare, is, that he was born at Stratford-upon-Avon—married and had children there—went to London, where he commenced actor and wrote poems and plays—returned to the place of his birth—made his will—died and was buried.

THE RETURN FROM EXILE.

I.

As memory pictured happier hours, home sickness seized my heart,
I never thought of English land but burning tears would start;
The faces of familiar friends would haunt me in my sleep,
I clasped their thrilling hands in mine—then woke again to weep!

II.

At last my spirit's fevered dreams so wrought upon my frame,
That life itself uncertain seemed as some worn taper's flame,
'Till o'er the wide blue waters borne, from regions strange and far,
I saw dear Albion's bright cliffs gleam beneath the morning star!

III.

That radiant sight redeemed the past, and stirred with transport wild,
I paced the swift bark's bounding deck, light-hearted as a child;
And when among my native fields I wandered in the sun,
I felt as if my morn of life had only just begun.

IV.

The shining golden butter-cup—the daisy's silver crest—
The living gems of every hue on Nature's verdant breast—
The cheerful songs of British birds, that rose from British trees—
The fragrance from the blossomed hedge, that came on every breeze—

The white cot peeping from the grove, its blue smoke in the
 sky—
The rural group of ruddy boys, that gaily loitered nigh—
The silent sheep-besprinkled hill—the rivulet-watered vale—
The lonely lake, where brightly shone the fisher's sun-lit sail;—

VI.

Awhile these seemed illusions brief of beauty and delight,
A dear but transitory dream—a mockery of the night!
For often in my slumbering hours on India's sultry strand,
In visions, scarce less palpable, I hailed my native land.

VII.

But when upon my wildering doubts reflection flashed the truth,
Oh! never in my childhood years, nor in my fervid youth,
So deep a rapture thrilled my breast as while I gazed around,
And recognized the thousand charms that hallow English ground!

STANZAS.

Yes—I have loved and honoured thee—
Nor guile, nor fear of guile were mine :
But, oh ! since thou can'st faithless be,
I'll grieve not for a heart like thine !

Lady, when first thine azure eye
Met and controlled my raptured gaze,
I breathed the fond impassioned sigh
That youthful love to beauty pays.

Could I have known, what *now* I know,
Its beam but brightened to betray,
In vain had shone the spurious glow
That led a trusting heart astray.

'Tis not an eye of brightest hue
Can woman's nobler spell impart ;
Fidelity and feeling true
Forge the strong fetters of the heart.

The transient charm hath lost its power,—
Indignant pride shall now rebel ;
For, cold and false One ! from this hour,
My soul is free—Farewell !—Farewell !

SUMMER AND WINTER.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA IN THE COLD SEASON.]

At this season of the year, in dear Old England, how exquisite is the enjoyment of a brisk morning walk and the social evening fire. Though a cold day in Calcutta is not exactly like a cold day in London, it often revives the remembrance of it. An Indian winter is indeed far less agreeable than a winter in England, but it is not without its pleasures. The mornings and evenings are sometimes truly delightful.

Still, however, who would not prefer the more wholesome frigidity of England? There, the external gloom and bleakness enhance our in-door comforts, and we do not miss sunny skies when greeted with sunny looks. If we see no blooming gardens, we see blooming faces. But as we have few domestic enjoyments in this country, and as our houses are as open as bird-cages, we have little comfort when compelled to remain at home on a cold day, with a sharp easterly wind whistling through every room. In our dear native country each season has its peculiar moral or physical attractions. It is not easy to say which is the most agreeable—its summer or its winter. Perhaps I must decide in favour of the former. The memory of many a smiling summer day still flashes upon my soul. If the whole of human life were like a fine day in June, we should cease to wish for 'another and a better world.' From dawn to sunset it is one revel of delight. How pleasantly, from the first break of day, have I lain wide awake, and traced the approach of the breakfast hour by the increasing notes of birds, and the advancing sunlight on my curtains! A summer feeling, at such a time, would steal upon my

spirit, as I thought of the long, cheerful day before me, and planned some rural walk, or rustic entertainment. The ills that flesh is heir to, if they occurred for a moment to my mind, appeared like idle visions. They were inconceivable as real things. As I heard the lark singing in 'a glorious privacy of light,' and saw the boughs of the green and gold laburnum at my window, and had my fancy filled with images of natural beauty, I felt a glow of fresh life in my veins, and my heart was almost inebriated with pleasure. It is difficult, amidst such exhilarating influences, to entertain those melancholy ideas which sometimes crowd upon us, and appear so natural, at a less happy hour. Even actual misfortune comes in a questionable shape, when our physical constitution is in perfect health, and the flowers are in full bloom, and the streams are glittering in the sun. So powerfully does the light of external nature sometimes act upon the moral system, that a sweet sensation steals gradually over the heart, even when we think we have reason to be sorrowful, and while we almost accuse ourselves of a want of feeling. The fretful hypochondriac would do well to bear this in mind, and not take it for granted that all are cold and selfish who fail to sympathize in his fantastic cares. He should remember that men are sometimes so buoyed up by the sense of corporeal power, and communion with nature in her cheerful moods, that things connected with their own personal interest, which at other times would irritate them to madness, pass by them like the wind. He himself must have had his intervals of comparative happiness, in which the causes of his present afflictions would have appeared trivial and absurd. He should not then, expect persons whose blood is warm in their veins, and whose eyes are open to the blessed sun in heaven, to think more of his sorrows than he would himself, were his mind and body in a healthful state.

With what a light heart and eager appetite did I enter the little breakfast parlour, whose glass-doors opened upon a bed of

flowers! The table was spread with dewy and delicious fruits from our own garden, and gathered by fair and friendly hands. Beautiful and luscious as were these natural dainties, they were of small account in comparison with the fresh cheeks and cherry lips that so frankly accepted the wonted early greeting. Alas! how that dear, domestic circle is now divided, and what a change has since come over the spirit of our dreams! Yet still I cherish boyish feelings, and the past is sometimes present. As I give an imaginary kiss to an 'old familiar face,' and catch myself almost unconsciously, yet literally, returning imaginary smiles, my heart is as fresh and fervid as of yore. Fifteen years and fifteen thousand miles do not change or separate faithful spirits, nor annihilate early associations. Parted friends may still share the light of love, as severed clouds are equally kindled by the same sun.

I must not be too egotistically garrulous in print, or I would now describe the various ways in which I have spent a summer's day in England. I would dilate upon my noon-day loiterings amidst wild ruins, and thick forests, and on the shaded banks of rivers—the pic-nic parties—the gipsy prophecies—the twilight homeward walk—the social tea drinking, and, the last scene of all, the 'rosy dreams and slumbers light,' induced by wholesome exercise and placid thoughts. But perhaps these few simple allusions are sufficient to awaken a train of kindred associations in the reader's mind, and he will thank me for those words and images that are like the keys of memory, and 'open all her cells with easy force.'

If a summer's day be thus rife with pleasure, scarcely less so is a day in winter, though with some little drawbacks, that give, by contrast, a zest to its enjoyments. It is difficult to leave the warm morning bed and brave the external air. The fireless grate and frosted windows may well make the stoutest shudder. But when we have once screwed our courage to the sticking point, and with a single jerk of the clothes, and a brisk jump

from the bed, have commenced the operations of the toilet, the battle is nearly over. The teeth chatter for a while, and the limbs shiver, and we do not feel particularly comfortable whilst breaking the ice in our jugs, and performing our cold ablutions amidst the sharp, glass-like fragments, and wiping our faces with a frozen towel. But these petty evils are quickly vanquished, and as we rush out of the house, and tread briskly and firmly on the hard ringing earth, and breathe our visible breath in the clear air, our strength and self-importance miraculously increase, and the whole frame begins to glow. The warmth and vigour thus acquired are inexpressibly delightful. As we re-enter the house, we are proud of our intrepidity and vigor, and pity the effeminacy of our less enterprising friends, who though, huddled together round the fire, like flies upon a sunny wall, still complain of cold, and instead of the bloom of health and animation exhibit pale and pinched cheeks, blue noses, and hands cold, rigid, and of a deadly hue. Those who rise with spirit on a winter morning, and stir and thrill themselves with early exercise, are indifferent to the cold for the rest of the day, and feel a confidence in their corporeal energies, and a lightness of heart that are experienced at no other season. But even the timid and luxurious are not without their pleasures. As the shades of evening draw in, the parlour twilight—the closed curtains—and the cheerful fire, make home a little paradise to all!

The warm and cold seasons of India have no charms like these, but yet people who are guiltless of what Milton so finely calls 'a sullenness against nature,' and who are willing in a spirit of true philosophy and piety, to extract good from every thing, may make themselves happy even in this land of exile. While I am writing this paragraph, a little bird in my room, who is as much a foreigner here as I am, is pouring out his soul in a flood of song. His notes breathe of joy. He pines not for an English meadow—he cares not for his

wiry bars—he envies not the little denizens of air that sometimes flutter past my window, nor imagines, for a moment, that they come to mock him with their freedom. He is contented with his present enjoyments, because they are utterly undisturbed by idle comparisons with those experienced in the past or anticipated in the future. He has no thankless repinings, and no vain desires. Is superior intellect then so fatal, though sublime a gift, that we cannot possess it without the poisonous alloy of care? Must grief and ingratitude inevitably find entrance into the heart, in proportion to the loftiness and number of our mental endowments? Are we to seek for happiness in ignorance? To these questions the reply is obvious. Every good quality may be abused, and the greatest, most; and he who perversely employs his powers of thought and imagination to a wrong purpose, deserves the misery that he gains. Were we honestly to deduct from the ills of life all those of our own creation, how trifling the amount that would remain! We seem to invite and encourage sorrow, while happiness is, as it were, forced upon us against our will. It is wonderful how some men pertinaciously cling to care, and argue themselves into a dissatisfaction with their lot. Thus it is really a matter of little moment whether fortune smile or frown, for it is in vain to look for superior felicity amongst those who have more 'appliances and means to boot,' than their fellow-men. Wealth, rank, and reputation, do not secure their possessors from the misery of discontent.

As happiness then depends upon the right direction and employment of our faculties, and not on worldly goods or mere localities, our countrymen might be cheerful enough even in this foreign land, if they would only accustom themselves to a proper train of thinking, and be ready on every occasion to look on the brighter side of all things*. In reverting to home-scenes we

* "I was ever more disposed," says Hume, "to see the favorable than the unfavorable side of things; *a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.*"

should regard them for their intrinsic charms, and not turn them into a source of disquiet by mournfully comparing them with those around us. India, let Englishmen murmur as they will, has many attractions and enjoyments. The princely and generous style in which we live in this country, the frank and familiar tone of our little society, and the general mildness and equality of the climate, can hardly be denied by the most determined malcontent. It is true that the weather is often, in the summer months, a great deal warmer than we like it; but if "the extreme heat" did not form a convenient subject for complaint and conversation, it is perhaps doubtful if it would so often be thought of or alluded to. And what climate is without its evils? The mornings and evenings of India are always cool enough for a drive, and the rest of the day is rarely so intolerable within doors as it is sometimes pathetically described. In the cold season a walk either in the morning or evening is delightful, and I am rejoiced to see many distinguished personages paying the climate the compliment of treating it like that of England. It is now fashionable to use our limbs in the ordinary way, and the Calcutta Strand has become a favourite promenade. It is not to be denied that besides the mere exercise, pedestrians at home have great advantages over those who are too aristocratic to leave their equipages, because they can cut across green and quiet fields, enter upon rural by-ways, and enjoy a thousand little patches of lovely scenery that are secrets to the high-road traveller. But still the Calcutta pedestrian has also his peculiar gratifications. It is true that he can enjoy no exclusive prospects, but he comes in more immediate contact with the rank, beauty and fashion of the place, and if, like the writer of this article, he is fond of children, he will be delighted with the numberless pretty and happy little faces that crowd about him, and awaken a tone of tender sentiment in his mind, and rekindle many sweet associations.

NOTE TO THE FOREGOING ESSAY.

I have touched upon the subject of the seasons in England and in India in a series of papers entitled *The Council of Three.* In the following passages, (extracted from those papers,) I have endeavored to show what might be said on both sides of the question by persons taking different views of it:—

C.—It is some time now since we have had our last meeting. I began to ask, "When shall we three meet again?"

J.—I was in hopes that it would have been "in thunder, lightning and in rain;" but the north-westers have held off very vexatiously.

S.—I had no such desire. I am like many other old Indians in my feelings, and greatly prefer the hot weather to the cold. I rarely find it too warm. While the cuticle is drenched in a wholesome moisture the climate is a very tolerable one. It is when there is a hot sun and a cold wintry wind that the health suffers. There is undoubtedly more sickness in the cold weather than the hot. The hot season, particularly on or near the river, when the air comes over the water, is not much more oppressive than the same season in Italy or the South of France.

J.—The worst season in India is the Rains. The lulls between the gales and showers are absolutely awful. I suffer at such times under a kind of waking night-mare.

C.—It was Charles the first, I think, who said that that was the best climate to which men might expose themselves with impunity the greatest number of hours in the day. He thought on this principle that the climate of England was the best in the world. Judging in this way the climate of Bengal is about the worst.

J.—It is perhaps doubtful whether the actual proportion of deaths in England is not more than equal to those in India. The deaths by consumption alone (the English disease) are frightfully numerous.

J.—If I had not been born and bred in England, I do not think I should ever have wished to live there. Some of England's own children have renounced her for more sunny lands. Byron talks of

> -"The cold and cloudy clime
> Where he was born, but where he would not die."

When I left England some fifteen or sixteen years ago, I was a mere boy. I wept bitterly as the white cliffs receded and grew dim, and I then thought that England was the glory of the earth and the favourite of heaven. The climate, the scenery and the people were all that could be wished for. When I returned after a twelve years' exile, having brooded fondly all that time over all that once enchanted me, I was "electrified with disappointment," as Campbell has it. I found the people as cold and dismal as the climate, and I wondered how a nation could so completely change its character in so short a time. Before I left the shores of England for the first time, every familiar face seemed the face of a generous friend; and now I saw none but cold and cautious strangers. Selfish cares—mercenary feelings—and the habits and anxieties produced by the necessity of making both ends meet, seemed to have stamped a mean and peculiar expression on every countenance. I had never recognized this melancholy aspect in the crowds that surrounded me in my happy youth. It was the observer, however, that had changed, and not the people. They were neither worse nor better; but my own head had grown clearer and my heart colder.

S.—I cannot say that I experienced the same disappointment on my first return to England. I found her the same dear unrivalled country that I knew in my youth. Though I looked on the hills and vallies with older eyes, my inward vision had not been dimmed, even by a long exile and many heavy afflictions. I had been a good deal in the upper provinces of India, and had travelled over the arid rocks and plains of Bundelcund in the hot winds. I recollect a day that I passed in one of its treeless, herbless, grassless, shadowless plains, that filled me with more horrible images of the infernal regions than are to be met with in the pages of Dante or of Milton. The hot wind was like a blast from hell, and nature withered beneath the light of a sun that scorched her like a ball of fire. In the midst of all this, I suddenly thought of the fresh green meadows of England, and burst into tears.

J.—I visited England in November 1819, and landed on a gloomy drizzling day that seemed better fitted for a converse with the Blue Devils than any day I ever passed in India. The rain continued with slight intermissions for nearly three weeks. I thought I should never again see the blessed sun in heaven. I put up at an inn in the city that had a dark, deadly-

looking discolored wall on every side of it. There was no catching a glimpse of the sky without going out in the rain. The scene was so forlorn and dismal indoors that I preferred catching a consumptive cold without, to dying of the horrors within. The people in the street presented a truly melancholy spectacle. Most of them were so wrapped up that they were "more clothes than men." They seemed exhausted with the weight of their wet garments. Their faces were pale, haggard, anxious. To use a vulgar but expressive phrase, they looked as if they could not help themselves. The streets were covered with a thin, black, slashy mud that spirted up to the walker's middle at every tread. The poor hackney coach horses, with their forlorn down-hanging heads, had their bellies completely coated with it, as if they had swam through that London compound element of earth and water. A more miserable place than England then appeared to me in reality, I never even dreamed of after the most indigestible of suppers.

C.—This conversation is an illustration of Milton's axiom, "The mind is its own place," and "can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell." The character of a country depends greatly upon the character of the observer, or his particular mood at the time of observation. What contradictory accounts do different travellers give us of the same places. Some can go from Dan to Beersheba, and find all barren; while others scatter around them the flowers of their own fancy, let them go where they will.

SONNETS,

WRITTEN IN EXILE.

I.

MAN's heart may change, but Nature's glory never ;—
And while the soul's internal cell is bright,
The cloudless eve lets in the bloom and light
Of earth and heaven to charm and cheer us ever.
Though youth hath vanished, like a winding river
Lost in the shadowy woods ; and the dear sight
Of native hill and nest-like cottage white,
'Mid breeze-stirred boughs whose crisp leaves gleam and quiver,
And murmur sea-like sounds, perchance no more
My homeward step shall hasten cheerily ;
Yet still I feel as I have felt of yore,
And love this radiant world. Yon clear blue sky—
These gorgeous groves—this flower-enamelled floor—
Have deep enchantments for my heart and eye.

II.

Man's heart may change, but Nature's glory never ;—
Though to the sullen gaze of grief the sight
Of sun-illumined skies may *seem* less bright,
Or gathering clouds less grand, yet she, as ever,
Is lovely or majestic. Though fate sever
The long-linked bands of love, and all delight
Be lost as in a sudden starless night,
The radiance may return, if He, the giver
Of peace on earth, vouchsafe the storm to still.
This breast once shaken with the strife of care
Is touched with silent joy. The cot—the hill
Beyond the broad blue wave—and faces fair,
Are pictured in my dreams ; yet scenes that fill
My waking eye can save me from despair.

Man's heart may change, but Nature's glory never ;-
Strange features throng around me, and the shore
Is not my father-land. Yet why deplore
This varied doom? All mortal ties must sever.—
The pang is past;—and now with blest endeavor
I check the rising sigh, and weep no more.
The common earth is here—these crowds adore
That earth's Creator; and how high soever
O'er other tribes proud England's hosts may seem,
God's children, fair or sable, equal find
A father's love. Then learn, O man, to deem
All difference idle save of heart or mind.
Thy duty, love—each cause of strife, a dream—
Thy home, the world—thy family, mankind.
Cossipore, 1839.

SONNET—WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

The page is laid before me, and a voice
That none could well resist, its soft command
Is breathing in my ear ;—my ready hand
Obeys, and proudly would my soul rejoice
If the coy Muse were subject to my call
As I to thine ; but, Lady, happier bards
Than he who now would claim thy kind regards,
Oft vainly at her sacred altars fall.
Her mood is changeful ever, and her dreams
May mock the mental eye. As brief as bright,
O'er life's dim land they flash their floods of light,
To leave a denser gloom. The steady beams
Of small dull stars shine through the weary night,
While fitfully the Muse's lightning gleams.

SONNET—ON TWO LOVERS.

Theirs was a hallowed flame; for they had met
In childhood's sunny path, ere tempest-showers
Had passed their shadows o'er the glittering hours
Of Life's fresh morn;—ere came one vain regret,
Or grief's malignant dews could coldly wet
The blooms of early joy,—when in the bowers
Of innocence and love, 'mid fair spring-flowers
They little dreamed the sun of hope would set!
Oh! sweet and brief delusion! Fierce and soon
The bleak storm howled; the gathering clouds were rife;
With death and desolation; in the noon
Of life and love, amid the gloom and strife,
Those fond impassioned lovers wildly parted;
She in the cold grave sleeps—*He* lingers broken-hearted!

NOON.

WRITTEN IN INDIA.

The lord of day, with fierce resistless might,
Clad in his robes of glory, reigned on high,
And checked the timid gaze of mortal eye
With the refulgence of his forehead bright.
I marked with fevered brow his form of light
Glare on the silver wave that slumbered nigh,
And sought the dryad's haunt, where zephyr's sigh
Came like a hallowed tone of sad delight
To soothe the wanderer's soul.—Beneath the shade
Of wide root-dropping banians, fit to be,
At such a time, the dreaming minstrel's bower,
On bright-winged visions flew the noon-tide hour;
While Fancy's hand those dear home-scenes pourtrayed
Whose living charms I never more may see!

POETRY AND UTILITARIANISM.

Prejudice apart, the game of Pushpin is of equal value with the art of music and poetry. If the game of Pushpin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either. Every body can play at Pushpin: poetry and music are relished only by a few. The game of Pushpin is always innocent; it would be well if the same could always be asserted of poetry. Indeed between poetry and truth there is a natural opposition; false morals, fictitious nature. The poet always stands in need of something false.—*Bentham.*

Touchstone.—Truly I would the gods had made thee poetical.

Audrey.—I do not know what poetical is. Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a *true* thing?—*As You like it.*

It is lamentable when philosophers are enemies to poetry.—*Voltaire.*

The coincidence of Mr Bentham's school with the ancient Epicureans in the *disregard of the pleasures of taste and of the arts dependent on imagination*, is a proof both of the inevitable adherence of much of the popular sense of the words *interest* and *pleasure*, to the same words in their philosophical acceptation, and of the pernicious influence of narrowing "*utility*" to mere visible and tangible objects, to the exclusion of those which form the larger part of human enjoyments.—*Sir James Mackintosh.*

Do they (the Utilitarians) not abuse Poetry, Painting and Music?—*Hazlitt.*

For song is but the eloquence of truth.—*Campbell.*

Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge.—*Wordsworth.*

Truth may dwell more clearly in an allegory or a moralled fable than in a bare narration.—*Feltham's Resolves.*

It is very wrong to represent it (philosophy) to youth as a thing inaccessible, and with such a frowning, grim, and terrible aspect. *Who is it that has put this pale and hideous mask upon it?*—*Montaigne.*

Bentham has asserted that "there is a natural opposition between poetry and truth." The case is directly the reverse; for truth is the soul of poetry. As well might it be said that there is a natural opposition between a portrait and the living model. Poetry, like painting, is an imitative art: the latter, however, is more limited in its range and tendency than the former. Poetry is not conversant with external forms alone, but with the mind of man. Fiction is but one of the means by which the poet conveys his truths. Poetry is the image of human nature and the material world; fiction is the glass of which the poet's mirror is composed. The reflection of an object in a mirror is not the less *true*, because a child might touch the glass with his hand,

and prove that the image of a thing is not the thing itself. Are the landscapes of Claude to be condemned as colored falsehoods, because they are full of cattle and human figures and trees and flowers that never actually existed but in the painter's mind? These are the fictions of painting, and they are analogous to the fictions of a still higher art. Such particular fictions are the vehicles of general truth. Is Shakespeare *opposed to truth* in his life-like representations of human nature? Bentham, and those who think with him that there is "a natural opposition between poetry and truth," and complain of the inaccuracy of the poet's FACTS, cannot consistently pronounce him innocent. Shakespeare was not on his oath when he told us of the murder of Desdemona. He was not in the witness box. If the scene had been put on canvass instead of into a book, perhaps the Utilitarians would have been less severe upon the painter than they have been upon the poet, and yet where is the difference? It is a picture in words instead of colours*.

I cannot understand how any man of ordinary acuteness should so confound the most positive distinctions, as to identify the spirit of poetry with its mere accompaniments. It is a truism, that metre and fiction are not the constituent parts of poetry. There may be these without poetry, and poetry without these. It appears to be necessary, however, to repeat so simple a fact for the enlightenment even of Philosophers†!

* "We were not aware till the other day, that Mr. Bentham had really evinced his want of universality to so puerile an extent; but we find the words in Mr. Richardson's '*Literary Leaves*,' with a good many more, refuting themselves at every step. And he thinks poetry contradictory to 'truth!' *This specimen of an amazing ignorance of the very essence of things, of the spiritual wants of mankind, and of the whole world of ideal beauty*, is happily followed up by Mr. Richardson, among other quotations by the two following:" (those from Voltaire and Sir James Mackintosh.)—*Leigh Hunt's Monthly Repository.*

† I may perhaps be expected to give a definition of poetry. This is difficult indeed. Dr. Johnson has said, that the attempt to limit poetry by a definition would only shew the narrowness of the definer. I dare not pretend to offer a

Every worldly-minded economist, who has just a sufficient glimmering of sense to enable him to fix his eye on the main chance, to talk about the importance of wealth, to load his own purse, and to 'lock his rascal counters from his friends,' may shield himself under the authority of the Utilitarians, and chuckle at the ridicule of that unprosperous and unproductive race of men, the Poets*. There is something very like a sarcasm in Bentham's remark in his *Rationale of Rewards*, that it is not necessary to assist poets by factitious rewards, because they take such a pleasure in their own art, and sometimes acquire a sudden reputation! It is true that poets possess an exquisite pleasure unknown to common minds, but this peculiar enjoyment being of a purely intellectual character cannot of course render them wholly independent of the pressure of life's daily cares. And yet how much is lost to the cold despisers of works of imagination, even with all the advantages of worldly prosperity!

" Unknown to them when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pulse with finer joy."

It has become a deadly heresy to speak too reverently of such men as Shakespeare and Milton. Jeremy Bentham and Mr. Mill are the new idols. The former writers, it is said, only amused mankind with melodious falsehoods; the latter have instructed them with useful truths! These modern sages would make man a mere automaton. Every thing like intensity of

complete and unobjectionable definition, but the following is the best I can give.

Poetry, *considered as an art*, consists in the imitation of moral and external nature in musical language. This imitation is not to be literal, but imaginative; not local or individual, but general or universal.

* "This I observe to the honor of poets,—I never found them covetous, or scrapingly base. The Jews had not two such kings in their catalogue as Solomon and his father; poets both. There is a largeness in their souls beyond the narrowness of other men; and why may we not then think this may embrace more both of heaven and God?"—*Feltham's Resolves.*

feeling or a refined enthusiasm is regarded by the new school of philosophy as an evidence of morbid irritability and an unsound judgment: it is treated as a disease of the mind. The poet is considered a romantic trifler, and his art an ingenious jugglery. It is the aim of the new sect to raise an eternal barrier between Poetry and Philosophy. They speak of the first as an illusion, and of the second as "the only true thing." If the Muse is represented as a false and frivolous coquet, Philosophy, as they have pourtrayed her, is a coarse and sensual being, who can scarcely see a yard before her. Her eyes are bent upon the ground, and her soul is wrapt in paltry calculations. She is a selfish and narrow-minded economist. If Poetry present her with her fairest products, her first and only question is, how much they will sell for, and to what account they can be turned. She has not even the dignity of a merchant, but is a petty retail dealer in the meanest wares. This degrading and disgusting spirit has seized for a while upon the public mind; but it cannot possibly continue, unless the very substance of our human nature could be decomposed by the chemistry of utilitarianism. While there is beauty in the universe, and it is acknowledged to be the production of a beneficent Power, who gives us nothing that is useless, Poetry, who bathes herself in the light and loveliness of nature, will never wholly cease to enchant and refine the heart of man.

There is no doubt, that the attention of the reading public was for some years too exclusively directed towards works of imagination, and poets are now suffering from the force of the reaction. There seem to be fashions in literature, as in every thing else; and each branch of literature and science has its turn of popularity. The public taste is now as violently mechanical and utilitarian as a few years ago it was poetical and imaginative. There was a great rage for poetry of a certain kind in the time of Pope; but the flock of mocking birds, who had got his tune by

heart, without catching a single gleam of his inspiration, soon wearied and disgusted the public ear.

After Collins, Young, and Thompson, (all genuine poets) there was a long night with scarcely a single luminary in the poetical horizon. Cowper indeed was "a bright particular star," and would have shone conspicuous even in a galaxy of glories; but an age that esteemed Hayley a great poet did not deserve to possess a Cowper. It was the long previous dearth of true genius that occasioned the present generation of poets such a hearty and reverential welcome, and it is owing to their numbers and to their intellectual affluence, that the craving for true poetry has been so speedily and entirely satisfied. I question if any poetical production from the most popular poet of the day, would now obtain a decent offer from the publishers. Moore would not get another two thousand pounds for a poem of the length and character of his Lalla Rookh, and Scott and Byron would have discovered, had they lived a little longer, that the poetry which was once quite as saleable as the actual necessaries of life, is now in the estimation of the multitude an unvalued toy. There are always a certain number of the lovers and readers of poetry (a fit audience though few), who remain faithful in their attachment to the Muses, through evil and through good report, and whom a thousand Benthams and a hundred thousand Mills could not drive from the green and sunny slopes of Parnassus. There are still warm-hearted and fine-minded truants, over whom these harsh schoolmasters have very slight authority. But even the lovers of poetry, though they are still enchanted with that holiest and divinest of all human arts, have got tired of their once favorite artists, and turning from the pages of Scott and Moore and Byron, have concentrated all their affections upon Wordsworth, who, though he may ever remain the poet's poet, will perhaps never become widely popular. The high reputation of Wordsworth as a poet has been forced upon the public by the critics; but though

his name is now familiar even to the mob of readers, his writings have not found the way into their hearts.

The word *utility* is one of the rocks on which the *Utilitarians* have been wrecked. It is admitted, that nothing is *useful*, but as it contributes more or less to the happiness of mankind. The Utilitarians seem to maintain that happiness consists in sensual enjoyments—in eating and drinking—in good clothes and comfortable houses. They encourage therefore only that sort of *useful* education which enables people *to get on in the world.* The poets do not deny the value of these things, in their way; but maintain that we have something in our nature that is superior to our mere animal impulses, and that is more worthy of our care. To this it is rejoined, that before we can exert our spiritual faculties we must possess the necessaries of life. We must live before we can think. Therefore it is of more consequence to live than to think, and therefore those articles that support life are more useful than poetry. The butcher and baker are accordingly more useful than the poet and the philosopher. Would not the same style of argument prove the *inutility* of virtue? If the happiness of human life resembled the happiness of brutes, the opponents of poetry and the fine arts would have the best of the controversy. It may be urged that I am caricaturing the Utilitarians, and I do not mean to assert that their entire system of philosophy is compressed into this rapid statement; but as far as the opposition between Poetry and Utilitarianism is concerned, the case is not unfairly stated. I see nothing objectionable in their celebrated doctrine respecting the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." The Utilitarians have argued on this point with great acuteness and sagacity, and in a truly philanthropic spirit. It is against their attacks on poetry and the Fine Arts that I think a stand should be made.

If the word *Utility*, has been used with no definite meaning, that of *Poetry*, has been still more vaguely understood. Many

decently educated people can discover no difference between the Rhymester and the Poet, and when they hear poetry spoken of as one of the loftiest exertions of the human intellect, they are very apt to cast up their eyes in wonder. They confound the *mechanism* of poetry with the *spirit*. But, if poetry be so mean a thing as to consist in the mere jingling of rhymes, how is it that there are so few genuine poets, and so many pretenders; and that the notion has so long prevailed, that *Poeta nascitur, non fit?* It is generally allowed that no care or labour will make a poet, though mere industry and a good capacity may secure success in any other art or profession. Genius of the highest and rarest order is essential to the true Poet.

Bentham says, that poetry is a mere amusement. *Prejudice apart,* says he, *the game of Pushpin is of equal value, with the art of poetry.* He even adds an implication that it is of superior value, for Pushpin gives pleasure to a greater number of persons, and is more innocent. Every body can play at Pushpin—Poetry is relished only by a few. Poetry is classed by Bentham, under the general head of " the arts and sciences of amusement," with Ornamental Gardening, and "amusements of *all sorts*." The utility of poetry and other "amusements," as far as *pleasure only* is concerned, is liberally enough admitted, with the pleasant addition (to soothe the irritated idolaters of Homer, Shakespeare and Milton), that they are " excellent substitutes for drunkenness, slander and the love of gaming* !"

* The despisers of poetry have generally shown that they did not understand it. The fault was in themselves. Mr. Locke has spoken almost as contemptuously of poetry as Jeremy Bentham has done. Mr. Molyneux wrote to Locke, and expressed his opinion that all our poets (except Milton) were mere ballad-makers compared to Sir Richard Blackmore. "There is," replied Locke, " as I with pleasure find, a strange harmony throughout between your thoughts and mine." Of the man who could think that Shakespeare and Spenser were mere ballad-makers compared to Blackmore we may fairly say, that he was utterly ignorant of the nature of poetry, and therefore quite unfit to judge of its utility or of its rank as an art.

Aristotle, in his Treatise on "The Poetic," has observed that "Poetry is a more philosphical and excellent thing than History. For poetry is chiefly conversant with *general* truths; history with *particular*." In his introduction to the translation of Aristotle's works, Mr. Taylor expresses his particular regret at the loss of the second and third books of the Treatise on Poetry; "because," says he, "there can be no doubt of Aristotle's having treated in one of those books of *the purification of the mind from depraved affections, and of the correction of the manners, as the principal and proper end, according to the ancients, of right poetical imitation.*" He adds, however, that "there is still extant a most admirable account of the different species of poetry by Proclus, the Coryphæus, next to Plato and Aristotle, of all true philosophers." In the translation of this work of Proclus there is the following passage. "For of Poetry one kind has the highest subsistence, is full of divine good, and establishes the soul in all the *causes of things*." Plato, according to Proclus, banished poetry from his commonwealth, not from any disrespect to the art itself, but from an apprehension that *young* people might misunderstand it (as Bentham did even in his old age), and fail to make a distinction between what is allegorical and what is not. Plato is said to have very "properly preferred poetry in its loftiest character to every other human art*." "He evidently testifies that human affairs become more perfect and splendid when they are delivered from a divine mouth, and that *true erudition* is produced in the auditors of such poetry." "The Muse," says Socrates, "makes men divine; and from these men thus inspired, others catching the sacred power, form a chain of divine enthusiasts."

* Certainly poets that write thus, Plato never means to banish. His own practice shows that he excluded not all. He was content to hear Antimachus recite his poem, when all the herd had fled him; and he himself wrote both tragedies and other pieces.—*Feltham's Resolves.*

But let us see what are the opinions of the most eminent English writers on the same subject. The epithet *divine* is constantly applied to this art, not only by the ancients, but by the most profound philosophers amongst the moderns. Lord Bacon has said, that Poetry has something *divine* in it*. Sir William Temple has written an Essay on Poetry, in which he observes "that it proceeds from a celestial fire, or divine inspiration." He maintains that "the great honor and request, wherein it has always been held, have not proceeded only from the *pleasure* and *delight,* but likewise from the *usefulness* and *profit* of poetical writings." "The chief end of Dramatic Poetry," he say, in another place, "seems to have been *instruction* under the guise of fables." He has given, as it were by anticipation, a pleasant hit at the Utilitarians—"*I know very well, that many, who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these charms would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their nature, if not of their understanding, into question.*" "I am apt to believe," says the same writer, "so much of the true genius of poetry, that I know not whether of all the numbers of mankind that live within the compass of a thousand years, for one man that is born capable of making such a poet as Homer or Virgil, there may be a thousand born capable of making as great generals of armies, or ministers of state, as any the most renowned in story."

* It appeareth that poetry serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality and delectation; and therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth humble and bow the mind unto the nature of things.—*Lord Bacon.*

What does even the stern and severe satirist, the Dean of St. Patrick, say of poetry?

"Not empire to the rising sun
By valour, conduct, fortune won;
Not greatest wisdom in debates,
Or framing laws for ruling states,
Such heavenly influence require
As how to strike the Muse's lyre."

Let me cite a beautiful passage from Sir Philip Sidney.

"The Poet doth, as if your journey should be through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass farther. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportions, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of musick—and with a tale, forsooth; he cometh unto you with a a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner."———"Even those hard-hearted, evil men, who think virtue a school name, and despise the austere admonitions of the philosopher, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be contented to be delighted; which is all the good fellow Poet seems to promise; and *so steal to see the form of goodness; which seen they cannot but love, ere themselves be aware, as if they took* A MEDICINE OF CHERRIES."

This reminds me of the celebrated simile in the beginning of the Jerusalem Delivered, (imitated from Lucretius.)

"Thou knowest the world with eager transport throng
Where sweet Parnassus breathes the tuneful song;
That truth can oft, in pleasing strains conveyed,
Allure the fancy, and the mind persuade:
Thus the sick infant's taste disguised to meet
We tinge the vessel's brim with juices sweet;
The bitter draught his willing lip receives;
He drinks deceived, and so deceived he lives."

Hoole's Tasso.

"I think," says the learned Feltham, "that a grave poem is the deepest kind of writing." "The study of poetry," it is remarked by Burke, "is the study of human nature; and as this

is the first object of philosophy, poetry will always rank first amongst human compositions." Dr. Johnson observes, that poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling in imagination to the help of reason. He makes Imlac, in the tale of Rasselas, relate, that "wherever he went he found that poetry was esteemed as the *highest learning*, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the Angelic nature."

Cowley has warmly said, that "there is not so great a lie to be found in any poet as the vulgar conceit of men, that lying is essential to good poetry." Poetry has been finely described as

"Truth severe in fairy fiction dressed."

Godwin in his "Thoughts on Man," speaks of the immortality of the poet, whose works are always fresh, in contrast with the fate of the natural and experimental philosopher. "New discoveries and experiments come, and his individual terms and phrases and theories perish. This," he continues, "is strongly calculated to repress the arrogance of the men of science, and *the supercilious contempt they are apt to express for those who are engrossed by the pursuits of imagination and taste*." The reason of the poet's immortality and his independence of all changing fashions and opinions is, that his element is the human heart; and until man's internal nature is changed, a truly great poet, such as Shakespeare for example, will continue to maintain his empire, while the language in which he writes exists.

Rapin asserts that "the great end of poetry is to *instruct*, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction." "It was said of Euripides," says Dr. Johnson, "that every word was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works might be collected *a system of civil and economical prudence*."

How easy it would be to multiply to almost any extent these quotations in support of the opinion, that poetry is not a childish

trifle, fitted exclusively for mere amusement; that it is not naturally opposed to truth either physical or moral, and that it is something better than a game at Pushpin, and intended for a higher purpose than that of passing away an idle hour or saving us from "drunkenness and slander!"

Some writers have endeavoured to show that Bentham could not, consistently with his system, avoid classing Poetry under the same head with Pushpin and *other sorts of amusements that are good substitutes for drunkenness and slander*. "Nobody," say they, "finds fault with the Naturalist who includes men and monkeys in the same order of being." This looks plausible; but it is mere sophistry. If there were the same connection between Poetry and Pushpin that there is between man and the monkey, the justification might be admitted. A monkey is perhaps in the same scale of being as a man, though man is at the top of the scale. But there is no kind of relation between Poetry and Pushpin. Philosophy and Pushpin are just as much connected. What would the disciples of Bentham say to any one who should couple in the same manner Utilitarianism and Pushpin?

It has been urged, as something like a triumphant answer to the present charge against Bentham of an unjust depreciation of works of imagination, that he was himself very fond both of poetry and music in his hours of relaxation from severer studies. But what does this prove? Did he not entertain himself in the same way with cards and dancing, and "other sorts of amusement?" If he had really pierced beyond the externals of poetry, he would have treated it in his deliberate writings with greater reverence, and not have spoken with an almost blasphemous contempt of an art which has been described as "divine" by some of the greatest intellects that this world has known. Do those who speak of poetry in the style of Bentham understand what is meant by the epithet *divine*, applied to no other works save those of the imagination, the most godlike faculty we possess? It will

be long, I suspect, before men of mind will transfer their idolatry of poetical genius to such an author as Bentham. He may be esteemed and honoured by many as an able and philosophical writer, but it would sound strange even to Utilitarian ears to speak of him in those enthusiastic terms which the critics apply to Shakespeare. " The world of spirits and nature," (says Augustus Schlegel,) "have laid their treasures at his feet; in strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a protecting spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child." " The magnitude of his genius," says Thomas Campbell, " puts it beyond all private opinion to set defined limits to the admiration which is due to it." " Shakespeare was a poet whom nature made," says Sherlock, " and then *broke the mould.*" " I restrain my expressions of admiration," says Morgan, " lest they should not seem applicable to mortal man." " He has been universally idolized," exclaims Sir Walter Scott, " and when I come to his honoured name I am like the rich man who hung up his crutches at the shrine, and was obliged to confess that he did not walk better than before. It is indeed difficult to compare him to any other individual. The only one to whom I can compare him, is the wonderful Arabian Dervise, *who dived into the body of each, and in that way became familiar with the thoughts and secrets of their hearts.*"

It is strange that any one should express a doubt as to the *moral result* of the productions of this wondrous poet, whose knowledge of the human heart was of so extraordinary a nature that men look upon his capacity as something supernatural. There is scarcely any person of polite education, in our own country at least, who does not owe something to his mighty genius. He is a teacher of the manliest and the gentlest virtues. His wisdom has diffused itself through the whole body of English

literature, and has become as familiar to his countrymen as household words. He who has a thorough knowledge of Shakespeare's works, and is really able to appreciate their moral and intellectual beauty, must be no ordinary man. The divine spirit and miraculous intelligence of the poet must mingle with and elevate his thoughts, amidst the crowd and hum of men and in the majestic solitudes of nature.

"Homer," says Bentham, "was the first of poets: where shall we place him among the moralists?" The answer to this is, that Homer was probably the greatest moralist of his own age. He taught mankind the virtues of generosity, bravery, temperance, magnanimity, fortitude, tenderness and friendship. Pope notices the opinion of Longinus, that Homer was remarkable for the grandeur and excellence of his sentiments. He also alludes to the "innumerable instances" which Dupont, in his Gnomologia Homerica, has given of a resemblance between the sentiments of Homer and those of the Scriptures.

"Poetry," observes the *Edinburgh Review* in a very able and interesting article on the life and writings of Dr. Currie, "does more for man than wine has ever been said to do. It is the best and noblest of drams. It brightens his countenance and makes glad his heart. It gives him wings and lifts him out of the dirt; and leads him into green valleys; and carries him up to high places, and shows him at his feet the earth and its glories. The man read Homer as Homer ought to be read, who said that every body looked to him a foot higher." The poets of the Bible have always been esteemed good moralists, even by those who do not believe the Scriptures to be the word of God. "The best security," says Campbell, "that we possess, for the probability of the poet's talents being employed in the support of virtue, is in the nature of Poetry itself. Impurity is an anomalous mixture in its character." As the painter or sculptor naturally selects the

loveliest objects in external nature, so, I think, is the poet naturally led to dwell on the finest traits of our moral being. That individual poets or painters have taken an opposite course only proves the obliquities of their particular tastes, and ought not to be brought against the character of their arts. Are all writers in *prose* immaculate? To suppose that an art so divine as that of poetry, so associated with the deepest feeling and the loftiest thoughts—an art of which the spirit infuses itself as it were into our converse with the Creator and the universe, is confined in its results to mere *pleasure*, and that pleasure bearing an affinity to the amusement derived from a game at Pushpin, is an absurdity that could only be excused in a drunkard or a fool. When a philosopher talks in this way, he deserves no mercy.

Who will dispute the morality of Milton, the main purpose of whose grand and glorious Epic is to "justify the ways of God to man?" Genuine poetry is, generally speaking, not only essentially true, but essentially moral. It is not to be denied that some poets, forgetful of their high calling, have abused their powers, and have compelled the Muse to enter upon an evil bye-path, and to link her native glory with vile and uncongenial associations. In this case the poet, and not his art, should be the subject of reprehension. But, as Dr. Channing has observed, true poetry cannot long be divorced from what is good and pure; and the writings of the most immoral poets exhibit the struggles of the ethereal spirit of poetry to escape from its unnatural connection with sensual images or mental degradation. The immoral parts are generally mere prose in verse, while the more poetical passages consist of those appeals to our best affections, those descriptions of the loveliness of external nature, or those glimpses of a state too glorious for complete revelation to mortal eyes, in which poetry delights and in which it most readily proves its power over the human heart. It is therefore no argument against poetry, that

the art has been misapplied by the artist*. Painting might be depreciated with equal justice, by holding up to contempt the vulgarities of the sign-painter or the caricaturist, and omitting all reference to the higher and holier imagination of a Raphael. We should judge of an art not by its meanest exhibitions, but its greatest triumphs ; as we estimate the strength of the eagle, not by its lowest but its loftiest flight. It is difficult to conceive any thing more truly unphilosophical than Bentham's notions on this particular subject. A school boy would hardly be guilty of so gross an error as that into which Bentham falls, when he identifies the external with the internal character of poetry, the letter with the spirit. The one may be mere falsehood, while the other is the divinest truth. Bentham must have confounded in his own mind the meanest verse with the sublimest poetry, before he could have brought himself to speak with flippant contempt of an art by which Homer, Shakespeare and Milton have made themselves immortal†. These are spirits of which men of intellect are proud to show their admiration. To profess a deep and ardent sense of their genius is to prefer a claim to the possession of superior taste and judgment. But it will be said, that all poets are not equally worthy of admiration. This is a palpable truism. But if there are many bad poets, are there not as many bad philosophers? If there are mean writers in verse, are there not mean writers in prose? Neither verse nor prose are to be condemned, merely because they are applied by wicked or ignorant writers to evil or foolish purposes. The faults of the poet are not the faults of his art.

* Do not the enemies of a Free Press justify their opposition to that mighty blessing much in the same way as the Utilitarians justify their opposition to Poetry? Both are admirable instruments of good, that are liable to be turned to evil purposes.

† Milton has himself observed, that we should neglect the common rhymers, and by the study of poetry of the highest order learn "*what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry both in divine and human things.*"

It is truly wonderful that any individual who has ever thought at all upon the human mind, and has witnessed the irrepressible enthusiasm with which men of taste in all ages have hailed the appearance of poetic genius, should yet regard it with an ignorant contempt. Such a man as Bentham could not fail to have observed the intense emotion often excited by the poet; and it is strange that he should have been aware of this prodigious power, and yet not have felt inclined to inquire into the cause. The fascination is not to be attributed to false morals and tinkling rhymes. What must he have thought of those persons who with the greatest reputation for genius and judgment, have pronounced poetry to be the highest of all human arts, and who have said that it is "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge?"

Matter-of-fact people conceive poetry to be opposed to truth, because it is chiefly conversant with that order of things and thoughts, which is beyond the range of their own minds. Whenever they attempt to be poetical themselves, they invariably do violence to nature and common sense. If they attempt to paint human passion, they are merely bombastic; their want of imagination renders them at once blind and cold. Nothing can be more false and extravagant than the verses of a literal-minded man.

Even men whose minds are elegant and refined, if they have not poetical genius, though they may be good judges of the compositions of other men, are unable themselves to paint the passions of the human heart or the beauties of external nature with spirit or fidelity. It is curious to observe, that in the most voluminous collections of verse by men of mere cleverness, in the midst of much that is ingenious, we seek in vain for a single poetical idea. Persons of talent or learning without genius, with all their labour and assiduity produce nothing in verse worthy of preservation, and are never poetical even by accident. In five thousand of their verses there are not five lines of poetry.

When we meet with the shortest fragment of true poetry, we allow the praise of genius to the writer.

Myriads of men have attempted to excel in this divine art, but how few have succeeded! How many able and well-educated persons have devoted their whole lives to it in vain, who would infallibly have excelled in almost any other study with the same talents and assiduity. Hayley, for example, a learned and clever writer, spent half a century in an unrequited courtship of the Muse. The "Admirable Crichton," who excelled in every other accomplishment, attempted poetry, and failed.

If *verse* be *poetry*, there is scarcely a respectable family in England that has not its poet. Almost every well-educated man has at some period of his life committed the sin of rhyme. Nothing is so easy or so common. But *Poetry* is an "art unteachable, untaught." One line that is breathed upon by the Muse is a hallowed thing.

The only way to account for Bentham's error, is to suppose that it originated in his own want of imagination, and in as great a mistake as to the nature of that faculty as he fell into with respect to poetry. We meet with many persons of ordinary knowledge and education, who laugh to scorn the pretensions of the poet as an instructor of mankind, and who are quite unable to understand that imagination is not only conversant with truth, but that no high truth is to be discovered without it. We look not, however, for such ignorance and obtuseness in a philosopher. Many metaphysicians have made poetry their text book, and the most subtle and abstruse discussions are often flashed upon our understanding by poetical illustrations*. It is a sad

* "A philosopher will admit some of those wonderful lines or words (in poetry) which bring to light the infinite varieties of character, the furious bursts or wily workings of passion, the winding approaches of temptation, the slippery path to depravity, the beauty of tenderness, the grandeur of what is awful or holy in man. In every such quotation, the moral philosopher uses *the best materials for his science; for what are they but the results of experiment and*

mistake to suppose that imagination is in direct contradistinction to reason. All truly great thinkers and discoverers have been indebted to the former faculty. In no one department of Literature and Science have men become eminent who have not possessed a large share of imagination. It is almost another word for genius; at all events there may be much talent but no true genius without it. Bacon, Newton, Leibnitz, Galileo, Columbus, Sir Humphrey Davy and Burke, and Fox, Channing and Chalmers have as much required the assistance of imagination as Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron and Wordsworth*. It is true that there is a difference in the degree and character of the imagination of these men, but in their several studies they have all exerted this noble faculty. It is imagination which suggests materials for the reason and judgment, or places them in that strong and vivid light which enables us to see them with distinctness. Some one has justly remarked, that the man who is able to see nothing but a silly extravagance in Berkeley's theory of the non-existence of matter, may feel assured that he is no metaphysician, and should never venture upon any profound metaphysical question. We may oppose the theory, and yet acknowledge the subtle genius and delicate apprehension of the theorist. The more lofty are the speculations of the metaphysician the more poetical he becomes. Dr. Channing, one of the most eloquent and imaginative of modern writers, in his Essay on Milton has explained, that our struggles after something holier and

observation on the human heart, performed by artists of other skill and power than his? They are facts *which could only have been ascertained by Homer, by Dante, by Shakespeare, by Cervantes, by Milton!* Every strong feeling which these *masters* have excited is a successful repetition of the original experiment, and a continually growing evidence of the greatness of their discoveries."—*Progress of Ethical Philosophy.*

* It was the habit of association, which forms a principal part of the complex faculty of the imagination, that may be said to have led to various discoveries in science, and to have furnished Bacon with his luminous illustrations in philosophy.—*Edinburgh Review.*

purer than this earth affords, carry us to the foundation and the sources of poetry*. His own pulpit discourses are full of that sublimity of thought and celestial ardour of feeling which he attributes in others to poetical inspiration. One would think that the very term *inspiration* would open the eyes of the most obtuse to the superior dignity of the imaginative arts. But the great mob of mankind are not easily persuaded that abstract studies can possess even an indirect practical utility, and look upon a poet as a visionary idler. Imaginative men are continually exposed to the insults and misapprehension of the vulgar, who only see what is immediately before them. Their notion of the utility of poetry is like Falstaff's notion of honour. They ask if it can set a broken leg or cure the grief of a wound, and on receiving an answer in the negative, they exclaim that it is a word—air—a trim reckoning! and therefore they'll have none of it! Sir Joshua Reynolds was once present at a meeting of a Society for the encouragement of commerce and manufactures, when Dr. Tucker, the dean of Gloucester, asserted that a pin-maker was a more valuable and useful member of society than Raphael. Here was a Utilitarian after Bentham's own heart! The painter was naturally indignant, and replied that this was the observation of a narrow mind, that sees with a microscopic eye but a part of the great machine of the economy of life, and takes the small part which he sees to be the whole. Commerce is the means and not the end of happiness. "This kind of argument," continued Sir Joshua, "is like making the brickmaker superior to the architect."

* "By those who are accustomed to speak of poetry as light reading, Milton's eminence in this sphere may be considered as only giving him a rank amongst the contributors to public amusement. Not so thought Milton. Of all God's gifts of intellect he esteemed poetical genius the most transcendent. He esteemed it in himself as a kind of inspiration, and wrote his great works with something of the dignity of a prophet. I agree with Milton in his estimate of poetry."—*Channing.*

The Utilitarians in their theory of morals seem to forget that "we have all of us one human heart;" and address themselves, and in the driest manner, to the understanding alone. Hazlitt is right in his remark, that the cultivation of a *moral sense* is not the last thing that should be attended to; and that truth, when carried alive into the heart by passion and imagination, makes a more vivid and lasting impression than all Bentham's tables and calculations of right and wrong, utility and inutility. A tender or spirited poetical illustration may linger on the ear and mind of the reader long after formal and dry discussions are forgotten.

Bentham's insult to the memory of such men as Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton, (whose art is less valuable than a game at Pushpin, and whose writings are only good substitutes for drunkenness and the love of gaming!) must recoil upon his own reputation, be remembered with his own productions, and yet be forgotten some centuries before the names of that illustrious triad. Mr. Mill, another Utilitarian, is guilty of the same error. In his remarks on the faculty of imagination he maintains that the Poet's trains of ideas end in nothing; that his train is its own end. It is all mere pleasure, or the purpose is frustrated*. In all other men the case is different—the end is important, not the train. This is the case, he says, with the merchant. "His trains are directed to a particular end, and it is the end alone which gives a value to the train. The end of the metaphysical, and the end of the mathematical inquirer is the discovery of truth; their trains are directed to that object; and are or are not, a source of

* There is a passage in Bentham on this subject, that shows into what a state of confusion of mind he was apt to be thrown when on the uncongenial subject of poetry. "All that can be alleged," he says, "in diminution of their" (Poetry and the Fine arts) "*utility* is, that it is limited to the excitement of *pleasure*; they cannot disperse the clouds of grief and misfortune." Thus we are told that though poetry *excites pleasure* it *cannot cheer the mind!* This is philosophy! Why a game at Pushpin, as it can give *pleasure*, may sometimes abstract the mind from *unpleasant* thoughts. Poetry can do more. It not only *amuses* but *instructs*.

pleasure as that end is or is not attained. But the case is perfectly different with the poet." If this be not a crude, false, and narrow doctrine, I should like to know what is.

The writer, who undertakes the defence of poetry against the aspersions of the literal and coarse-minded, has a difficult task to perform, because in its very nature it is so subtle and intangible, that however mighty its influence, it is impossible to indicate the precise character and extent of its effects. They therefore who have to place it in opposition to grosser and more palpable objects, can only trust for the effect of their arguments to men of kindred minds, who are able to understand that there are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in the philosophy of cold and unimaginative reasoners.

Though this article is already so full of quotations, I make room with particular pleasure for a grateful tribute to poetry from the pen of Coleridge.

> "I expect neither profit, nor general fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own 'exceeding great reward.' It has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me."

Sir James Mackintosh once remarked, that in most vexations he successfully applied to poetry for consolation. Amidst all his active struggles in public life, Mr. Fox was always sighing for an opportunity to turn to the perusal of his favorite poets; and even in his latest years he was perpetually talking to his friends of his intention to write a treatise on "the three arts of Poetry, History, and Oratory." Burke in a letter to Professor Richardson, the author of the Essays on Shakespeare's dramatic characters, observes, that "poetry is the study of human nature; and as this is the first object of philosophy, poetry will always rank first among human compositions." If poetry were to be struck out of the literature of a nation, how bare it would leave it!

When we reckon up the literary honours of a country, how large and conspicuous a share is divided amongst the poets! Let us turn either to the ancients or to the moderns, and the truth of this remark will be sufficiently obvious.

MEMORY.

I.

When o'er this glimmering land of dreams
Life's morning meteors brightly play,
And hope's and fancy's blending beams
With hues celestial light the way,
How rich the varied prospect seems!
How like Enchantment's fair array!

II.

Alas! full soon those glories fade,
Like rays that orient skies adorn,
As clouds on clouds in lurid shade
O'er all their azure depths are borne,
And leave Life's traveller, spell-betrayed,
A darkened path—a heart forlorn!

Ah, yes! though brightly Fancy glows,
And fair the light by young Hope shed,
More true though sad, the soul's repose
When o'er the past, by Memory led,
We greet each scene she fondly shows,
And see the faces of the dead!

THE THREE SONS*.

Close on the green marge of a lonely river
Fed by the mountain torrent heard afar
At hush of eve, a small white human nest,
Half-buried in a wilderness of bowers,
And but with broken sun-beams thinly specked,
'Neath Summer's brightest sky, like a faint light
Piercing the gloom umbrageous, shineth pale,
And on the cold wave's tremulous mirror throws
A dream-like shadow dim. That silent shed
As kindred to the sylvan landscape seems
As the green covert where the timid deer
Slumbers at noon, or clover-covered cell
Where wearied e'en of sunshine and of song
The skylark folds his wing. Its aspect wild
Would charm a hermit's soul, and scarce recalls
When the chance wanderer breaks the solitude
A dream of social life! There Magdaline,
Fled from the false world's glare, unsuited ever
To grief's dark night, as radiance to the tomb,
Her lone and widowed heart no longer stirred
With one sweet joy domestic, day by day,
Beneath its ivied porch, broods mournfully
O'er happier hours departed. Oft she sighs
To think how heavily and slow must fall
Her last few sands of life. Though three fair youths
Are mirrored still in her maternal breast,
These all are far away! In foreign lands
They seek what fate denied them in their own.

* Suggested by a German story.

But life is fraught with change;—the stillest pool
Is sometimes ruffled by the gentle play
Of wandering zephyrs wild. So fortune's breath
May stir the sullen waters of despair,
'Till the dull surface dimple into smiles!
Though hope was shrouded like a Lapland sun,
And day seemed gone from earth, the mourner's soul
At last was touched with light! One summer's eve,
Late lingering on her long-accustomed seat
Beneath the shaded threshold, tranquil thoughts,
Accordant with the landscape and the time,
Fell on her withering heart like holy dew;
For Nature's tenderest influence benign
To that soft mood was ministrant. The scene
Might well have calmed a spirit ruder far,
And soothed less gentle sorrow. Fleecy clouds
Like white-robed phantoms fair, in radiant ranks
Close thronged the vault of heaven, whose azure tints
Gleamed out between like blue meandering veins
Of delicate marble. Fitfully the moon
Her beauty veiled, then gliding proudly forth
Again her glorious countenance revealed
To charm a subject world!
At such an hour
How strangely dissonant or unusual sounds
Flutter the dreaming soul! The silence deep
Was broken, as when frighted birds arise
From some still forest bower. A steed's quick tramp
Rang through the rural solitude around,
And MAGDALINE, up-starting with surprise,
Her pale hands folded on her heaving breast,
Peered through the verdant vista, lone and dim
That fronts her Cottage-home; when swift as thought,

Her strained eyes met the well-remembered form
Of him whose childhood's charms first taught her heart
A mother's transport! Motionless awhile,
Spell-bound, she stood, struck mute with sudden joy!
Till as he knelt before her, a faint sigh,
And one full burst of tears, her brief trance broke,
And while serener rapture thrilled her frame
She sunk upon his breast.
"Kind Heaven," she cried,
"Hath blessed my midnight dream, my daily prayer,
And not in cold neglect and solitude
I now shall journey onward to my grave.
But soothed and cherished by the light of love
E'en age may wear a charm!" And gently then
Her eldest born, the favored EBERT, spake—
"Fortune rewards my travel and my toil,
And fondly would my true heart now repay
The love maternal lavished on my life
Till youth was merged in manhood. Oh! no more
Echo the drear sighs of these river reeds,
Or the wild music of these mournful boughs,
That moan at every breeze! Oh! quickly leave
This melancholy hermitage austere,
And share a social home!" With grateful heart
Glad MAGDALINE consents, and soon she smiles
Beneath a brighter roof. But not long there
Dwelt that shy guest, domestic happiness!
In EBERT's soul, with subtle poison fired,
Inebriate with a love far less divine,
The filial tie was loosened; and his fate
In hour unblest was linked to one whose charms
Of outward form and feature, were the spell
That wrought his ruin. As a bright-hued cloud

May bear the brooding spirit of the storm,
His beauteous bride, alas! a soul betrayed
Unworthy of its radiant tenement;—
And poor insulted MAGDALINE returned
To the lone Cottage by the mountain stream.
That home was like her heart, almost a ruin,
And desolate as her doom. Dark moss had grown
O'er the discolored walls, and all around
Was rank luxuriance or drear decay.
In a forlorn monotony severe
The dull days passed. At length her younger boy,
BERTHOLD returned; a formal visit paid
And proffered gold, but not the filial love
More dear than precious gems. "Alas!" she cried,
"The bitter mockery of a mother's name,
But not one bliss maternal, now is mine;
My sole fair hope seems fading like a cloud
Above the setting sun. My darkened heart
Forbodes that HENRIC on the field of fame
Hath proudly breathed his last!" A dream confirmed
This mournful fear; a warrior on the ground
Lay bathed in blood and gazing on his face,
She saw—her son! "Farewell! farewell!" she said,
Awaking wild, "at least *thou* hast not scorned
The grey hairs of thy parent."

Sorrow now
Wasted her aged form. At last e'er Fate
Had quenched life's tremulous flame, her HENRIC dear,
To make her dark dreams fade like morning mist,
Returned,—an honored soldier, one whose fame
Had raised his soul, but hardened not his heart.
With filial reverence he kissed her brow,
And when upon the broad light of his joy

Dim memories cast their shadow, sudden tears
Fell from his azure eyes like the big rain
That sometimes from the fairest summer skies
A transient cloud may shed.
A few moons passed
When from a distant comrade HENRIC heard
Rumours of war, and, with fresh ardour fired,
Spoke of his quick return to that far clime
Where all his laurels grew. "Oh! bitterest trial!"
Sad MAGDALINE exclaimed. "My *only* Son,
(For what to me are thy false brethren now?)
Wilt *thou* desert thy mother,—when the goal
Of life's long, weary pilgrimage is nigh,
Nor soothe her at the gloomy gates of death?—
Oh! leave her not to wither in despair;
Unwept and unattended thus to die!"

There was a struggle in that warrior's soul
Severe though brief; 'tis hard when glory's smile
Thrills the young heart, its witchery to defy;—
But filial virtue triumphed! The fond tears
A mother sheds are potent as the drops
That the hard marble print, and HENRIC's heart
By the hearth gentle, as in battle brave,
Was touched;—he paused amid his proud career
To sweeten a lorn parent's solitude
With looks of love;—And as an aged tree
Propped and protected flourishes anew,
Poor MAGDALINE's autumnal hopes put forth
A few pale blossoms more;—her closing day
Grew calm and fair;—Affection's ever-green
Twined round her heart; and star-like pleasures cheered
The tranquil twilight of her evening hours!

ANNA SEWARD AND DOCTOR DARWIN.

Doctor Darwin's transplantation of the poetical flowers of Anna Seward into his "*Botanic Garden*," is one of the most curious incidents in literary history. That a man like Doctor Darwin, who had a moral and literary character to support, and who had such original resources in his own imagination, should have appropriated to his own use, and without any kind of acknowledgment, the production of a contemporary poet whose vanity was so little likely to forgive the fraud or preserve a self-denying silence, is indeed surprising, and would not be credited on ordinary evidence. The fact, however, is perfectly well known. Thomas Campbell in the notice of Doctor Darwin, in his "Specimens of the British Poets," very unjustly treats Miss Seward's claim with incredulity and contempt. There is something even spiteful in his allusion to her. "Miss Anna Seward," he says, "in her *Life of Darwin*, declares herself the authoress of the opening lines of the poem, (the Botanic Garden,) *but as she never had the courage to make this pretension during Doctor Darwin's life, her veracity on the subject is exposed to suspicion.*" Towards the conclusion of his notice of Darwin he has another fling at the poetess. "Darwin's Botanic Garden," he says, "once pleased many better judges than *his affected biographer.*" Thomas Campbell is, undoubtedly, a true poet, and when he has no personal prejudices to blind his judgment, he is as true a critic. We cannot help thinking, however, that in this instance he is any thing but impartial. There is a passage in one of Anna's letters which was not calculated to secure the favourable judgment of the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*. "You ask me," she writes to one of her correspondents, "my opinion of the new

poem, *The Pleasures of Hope*, and observe, that it is thought an ingenious counterpart to *The Pleasures of Memory*. It was lent me for a short time, and my perusal was single and hurried. I rose from it without any impression of having found on its pages much of the strength of original genius." This is not a very just criticism, but it is a hasty one; and, we are to remember, that Miss Seward had not seen Campbell's maturer and more energetic productions—his inimitable lyrics. At the time these letters were published Miss Seward's fame stood pretty high, and as they were edited by his friend Scott, it is more than probable, that Campbell had either read or heard of this off-hand condemnation. Campbell is, we believe, the only writer who has insinuated against Miss Seward herself a still severer charge than that which she brought against Darwin. A daring misappropriation like that of Darwin's is a far less disgusting crime than a felonious attack upon the character and property of the defenceless dead. But, we are convinced, that in the present case Mr. Campbell is either a less cautious or less candid judge than he ought to be in a matter so seriously affecting the moral reputation of a female, who was always greatly respected in private life. We admit, that there is no *direct evidence* that Miss Seward had spoken personally to Doctor Darwin upon the subject of his plagiarism; and this circumstance is undoubtedly remarkable, as she occasionally corresponded with her spoliator even subsequent to his literary theft, and continued to speak of his poetry to all her correspondents with most enthusiastic commendation. That she was not likely to refrain from speaking on such a subject from any delicacy or tenderness to Darwin, or any want of boldness and candour, we may gather from the tone of some of her letters to Hayley, to Mrs. Piozzi and to Henry Hardinge. Nothing can be more frank and fearless than these. But if there is no evidence that she complained to Doctor Darwin on this subject, neither is there any strong reason to believe the contrary. At all events, some of Mr. Campbell's statements are

undoubtedly inaccurate. He tells us, for instance, that Darwin published the *first* part of his Botanic Garden (the exordium of which is Miss Seward's) in the year 1781. He is evidently not aware of the fact, that the *second* part of the poem was published before the *first;* and that the first part did not appear till 1792. This is an important error. Miss Seward gave the lines to Doctor Darwin in the year 1779. A friend of Doctor Darwin's, (Mr. Stevens) sent them to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1783, in the May number of which year they were published *with her name,* and were copied, also with her name, into the *Annual Register* of the next year. They were also inserted with her signature in Shaw's History of Staffordshire in 1798, four years before the death of Doctor Darwin.

They were thus claimed by her signature (and the claim remained undisputed) in two of the most popular periodicals of that day, eight or nine years before Doctor Darwin transferred them to his Botanic Garden! Then again, if we have no direct information of her having addressed Darwin on the subject orally, or by letter, we know that Miss Seward made no secret of the matter even in the Doctor's life-time. In a letter to Mr. Repton, dated July, 1789, she observes, "One of the notes to the part which Doctor Darwin has just published, induces me to believe he retains his design of opening his first part with my sketch of the valley. Surely he judges wrong; so great a work ought not to contain lines, especially in the exordium, which are known to have been written by another." From this paragraph we gather two conclusions—the one is, that Miss Seward was aware that Doctor Darwin had some intention to use her lines, though she might naturally have expected that he would compliment her with an acknowledgment; and the other is, that she looked upon her parentage of them as too well known, at least to her correspondent, to make it necessary for her to enter into any argument or explanation to support her claim. In the same let-

ter there is an observation which seems to hint that Darwin had some sinister design in the order of his publication of the Botanic Garden ;—"*For some reason inscrutable to me, he publishes the second part first.*" Is it possible that he could have acted under the impression, that Miss Seward might not live to see the first part, and to claim her share of it? We would not willingly believe it. We forget what were Darwin's avowed reasons for not beginning the publication of his work with the first part. The next mention that Miss Seward makes of the matter is in a letter to Mr. Jackson, dated August, 1792, the same year in which the first part of the Botanic Garden was published ;—" He (Doctor Darwin) retains without the least acknowledgment, not even the quotation marks, and places, as the exordium of this his resplendent poem, a copy of verses of mine which I wrote in his Botanic Garden, near Lichfield, in the year 1779, when he himself was an inhabitant of Lichfield.——My verses had the honour of suggesting to the Doctor the first idea of this exquisite composition." She repeats the same complaint to Mr. Thomas Park, in a letter dated 1801, the year before Darwin died. After this what are we to think of Campbell's assertion, that she had never the courage to make this pretension during Doctor Darwin's life? The verses in question, though upon the whole amongst her happiest efforts, are not so superior even to her worst performances as to excite any suspicion on the ground of incapacity. There are two or three of her other pieces that are quite equal to them, and in the same style. The following description of the sea round the North Pole, in her Elegy on Captain Cook, though not without its faults, was honored with the praise of Dr. Johnson:

" From the rude summit of yon frozen steep,
Contrasting Glory gilds the dreary deep!
Lo!—deck'd with vermil youth and beamy grace,
Hope in her step, and gladness in her face,
Light on the icy rock, with outstretch'd hands,
The Goddess of the new Columbus stands.

Round her bright head the plumy peterels soar,
Blue as her robe, that sweeps the frozen shore;
Glows her soft cheek, as vernal mornings fair,
And warm as summer-suns her golden hair;
O'er the hoar waste her radiant glances stream,
And courage kindles in their magic beam.
She points the ship its mazy path, to thread
The floating fragments of the frozen bed.
While o'er the deep, in many a dreadful form,
The giant Danger howls along the storm.
Furling the iron sails with numbed hands,
Firm on the deck the great Adventurer stands;
Round glitt'ring mountains hears the billows rave,
And the vast ruin thunder on the wave.—
Appall'd he hears!—but checks the rising sigh,
And turns on his firm band a glist'ning eye.—
Not for himself the sighs unbidden break,
Amid the terrors of the icy wreck;
Not for himself starts the impassion'd tear,
Congealing as it falls;—nor pain, nor fear,
Nor Death's dread darts, impede the great design,
Till Nature draws the circumscribing line.
Huge rocks of ice th' arrested ship embay,
And bar the gallant Wanderer's dangerous way.—
His eye regretful marks the Goddess turn
The assiduous prow from its relentless bourn."

Miss Seward speaks in a very gentle tone of Dr. Darwin's alterations of the lines he stole from her; though he has by no means improved them. They remind us of *Sir Fretful Plagiary's* amusing simile—"Steal! to be sure they may; and egad serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make them pass for their own." The following really beautiful lines were undoubtedly injured by Dr. Darwin's alterations.

"To charm thine eye, amid the crystal tide
With sinuous track, my silvery nations glide;
My choral birds their vivid plumes unfold,
And insect armies wave their wings of gold."

Anna Seward.

"On twinkling fins my pearly nations play,
Or win with sinuous train their trackless way.
My plumy pairs, in gay embroidery dressed
Form with ingenious bill the pensile nest."

Dr. Darwin.

We shall now give the stolen verses in the state in which they were circulated by the author, and before they were altered by Darwin to suit his purpose. They are very descriptive, animated and harmonious.

"VERSES WRITTEN IN DR. DARWIN'S BOTANIC GARDEN,

near Lichfield, July, 1778.

"O, come not here, ye proud, whose breasts enfold
Th' insatiate wish of glory, or of gold!
O come not here, whose branded foreheads wear
The eternal frown of envy or of care!
For you no Dryad decks her fragrant bowers,
For you her sparkling urn no Naiad pours;
Unmark'd by you, light Graces skim the green,
And hovering Cupids aim their shafts unseen.
But thou, whose mind the well-attemper'd ray
Of taste and virtue lights with purer day;
Whose finer sense each soft vibration owns,
Mute and unfeeling to discordant tones;
Like the fair flower, that spreads its lucid form
To meet the sun, but shuts it to the storm;
For thee my borders nurse the glowing wreath,
My fountains murmur and my zephyrs breathe;
To charm thine eye, amid the crystal tide,
With sinuous track, my silvery nations glide;
My choral birds their vivid plumes unfold,
And insect armies wave their wings of gold.
And if with thee some gentle maid should stray,
Disastrous Love companion of her way,
O! lead her timid step to yonder glade,
Whose arching rock incumbent alders shade!
These, as meek evening wakes the temperate breeze,
And moon-beams glimmer thro' the trembling trees,
The rills that gurgle round shall sooth her ear,
The weeping rock shall number tear for tear;

And as sad Philomel, alike forlorn,
Sings to the night, reclining on a thorn,
While at mute intervals each falling note
Sighs in the gale, and whispers round the grot,
The sister-woe shall calm her throbbing breast,
And softest slumbers steal her cares to rest.

Thus spoke the GENIUS, as he stept along,
And bade these lawns to Peace and Truth belong;
Down the steep slopes he led, with modest skill,
The grassy path-way, and the vagrant rill;
Stretch'd o'er the marshy vale the willowy mound,
Where shines the lake amid the cultur'd ground;
Rear'd the young woodland, smooth'd the wavy green,
And gave to BEAUTY all the quiet scene.

O! may no ruder step the bowers prophane,
No midnight wassailer deface the plain!
And when the tempests of the wintry day
Blow golden autumn's varied leaves away,
Winds of the North, restrain your icy gales,
Nor chill the bosom of these HAPPY VALES!"

To account for the Doctor's conduct, every way unworthy of him, is not a very easy task. Perhaps he thought that if any complaint were made to him, he should be able to laugh it off as a pleasant joke. That he had not a very delicate sense of honor in such matters one of Miss Seward's anecdotes sufficiently demonstrates. When Mr. Mundy had finished his poem of "Needwood Forest," the Doctor wrote three little poetic compliments on the work. To the best he put his son's initials, to the second-best his own, and to the worst *Miss Seward's!* When the lady saw them in print at the conclusion of Mr. Mundy's poem, not liking the manœuvre, she reproached the Doctor with it. "He laughed it off," she says, "in a manner peculiar to himself, and with which he carries all his points of despotism." This anecdote was given to a literary correspondent at a time when, if it had not been true, it was likely enough to be contradicted by the Doctor or his friends. The *Edinburgh Review*, in noticing the life of Darwin, (in any thing

but a complimentary or friendly tone,) acknowledged that the correctness of her statement respecting the adoption of her lines as an introduction to the first Canto of the Botanic Garden is placed beyond a doubt. Even the mild and cautious Walter Scott says, that Darwin's disingenuous suppression of the aid of which he had availed himself, must remain a considerable stain upon the character of the Poet of Flora.

Miss Seward's letters are the most artificial epistolary compositions in the language. They are sometimes ludicrously inflated. They are rarely, however, obscure or dull. They teem with highly interesting literary anecdotes and very ingenious criticisms on poetry. If the criticisms, when influenced by personal partialities, are too laudatory, it is an error that leans to virtue's side. She was an enthusiast in friendship, and appears to have taken as intense an interest in the success of her numerous poetical friends as in her own. Her character in this point of view is quite admirable. She had not the slightest taint of envy in her nature, and had such a generous admiration of intellectual eminence, that she could take the most profound and fervid delight in the productions of those whom she personally disliked or who had seriously injured her. Thus she is perpetually dilating upon the greatness of Dr. Johnson's genius, though she abhorred the man. Darwin's conduct towards herself never checked in the least her warm admiration of his genius, and she seizes every opportunity of offering his Muse a glowing tribute of applause. An ill-natured critic might find a feast of faults in her six volumes of letters, and yet they are not only highly entertaining on account of the literary anecdotes and ingenious criticisms on poetry with which they abound, but they charm us with so many traits of a delicate mind and a feeling heart, that we allude to the imperfections of her style and her occasional errors with something like that reluctance with which we admit the defects of a personal friend. Mudford, in his Life of Cumberland, attacks her with savage bitterness, in return for an

observation in one of her letters to the effect that Sheridan's portrait of Cumberland, *Sir Fretful Plagiary*, is not a caricature. He affirms that her correspondence is "an heterogeneous mass of vanity, pedantry and virulence;" and gives a specimen of what he calls her "miserable rant." This is outrageously severe—in fact quite unjust, and Mr. Mudford's own style is perhaps in every respect as open to censure as Miss Seward's. Mr. Mudford himself records the fact, that when Cumberland's son saw *The Critic* performed he immediately recognized his father in the character of *Sir Fretful*. The amusing anecdote of the origin of this satirical sketch is worth repeating, though it may be familiar to readers who are versed in the history of Dramatic Literature. It is said that when Sheridan produced his *School for Scandal*, Cumberland, who was always remarkable for his jealousy of other men's success in his own line, sat in a conspicuous part of the Theatre, and while the house rang with laughter and applause, preserved a perfect gravity of countenance, and expressed his surprise at the merriment of those about him. Sheridan was told of this. "It was somewhat ungracious," he observed, "in Cumberland not to laugh a little at my comedy, when I lately laughed at one of his tragedies from the beginning to the end*." Not satisfied with this pungent witticism, he subsequently revenged himself still further by drawing the portrait of Cumberland in *The Critic*.

* However, Sheridan himself, when he tried his hand at the serious drama, gave judicious critics a temptation to indulge in risible emotions. The play of *Pizarro*, is mere fustian from the first scene to the last. Its sickly sentimentality—its extravagant heroism—and its stilted and unnatural diction are very offensive to a mature and healthy judgment. It is a sad thing that he should have associated his name with such a production. It is true that it is little more than a translation from the German; but the choice of such a play for translation, and the style in which it is "*done* into English," show that Sheridan had little genius for the *tragic* drama. He should have been satisfied with his fame as a wit. In his comedies the brilliant thoughts and fancies sparkle as incessantly as fireflies in an Indian grove. But he had no mastery over the graver and deeper passions. In the play of *Pizarro* human nature is melodramatized after the same manner as inanimate nature is bedaubed and varnished on a tea-tray.

When we first sat down to a perusal of Anna Seward's letters, we were sorely tempted to make an amusing collection of her foolish praises of small poets now forgotten, and to expose many of her defects of style; but as we proceeded in our task, we were so much touched with her amiable personal qualities, and so much pleased with the better parts of her correspondence, that "a change came over the spirit of our dream," and we were determined to dwell only on the favorable side of her character. Nothing can be more interesting than some of the domestic allusions in these letters. It appears that she waited upon her old bedridden father with the same profound and ever-watchful tenderness with which Pope attended upon his mother,

"And rocked the cradle of reposing age."

Such glaring colours, however, catch the vulgar eye. The crowd are enraptured with these glittering effects, in which they think that nature is not exaggerated but surpassed. The language of *Pizarro* is neither verse nor prose. It reminds us of Dr. Johnson's censure of blank-verse; "If it be not tumid and gorgeous," said he, "it is crippled prose." Sheridan, though eschewing blank-verse for an equivocal measure of his own invention, has contrived in this tragedy to combine all the faults attributed by the critic to the unrhymed heroic metre. The style is not only inflated and gaudy, but it limps into the bargain. It is not quite fair to expect much, even from the best actors, when this strange piece is brought upon the stage; in the performance of such a play actors are of little importance. They merely add by their presence to the general effect of the spectacle. "Now," says *Puff* in the *Critic*, "now, for my magnificence, my noise, and my procession!"

"The play stands still; damn action and discourse;
Back fly the scenes, and enter foot and horse."

This couplet of Pope's seems to have been suggested by a passage in the *Rehearsal*. "The plot stands still," says Smith. "Why, what in the world is a plot good for," replies Bayes, "but to bring in fine things?"

In the theatrical exhibition of *Pizarro* the tailor and the actor seem to divide the public admiration.

"Such was the shout, the long-applauding note
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat.
* * * * * *
Booth enters—hark! the universal peal!
'But has he spoken?'—'Not a syllable,'
'What shook the stage, and made the people stare?'
'Cato's long wig, flowered gown, and lackered chair.'"

Such instances of domestic virtue in the literary character should always be duly recorded, for they double its attractions. If the sentimental Sterne "loved a dead ass better than a living mother," it is gratifying to be able to turn to instances of imaginative minds connected with tender hearts, of spirits who are not the less capable of practical kindness and home-emotions because they occasionally sympathize with beautiful abstractions or soar into a visionary world.

Miss Seward forms a kind of link in literary history between the last generation and the present. She was personally acquainted with Dr. Johnson and Boswell, with Dr. Darwin and Hayley, with Dr. Parr and Sir Walter Scott and Robert Southey.

SONNET—AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

The land ne'er smiled beneath a lovelier day,
So rich is every light, so soft each shadow!
How brightly beautiful this sun-lit meadow!
How merrily the small rills o'er it stray,
While on their fairy banks sweet children play!
With songs of birds the perfumed groves are ringing–
'Neath cottage eaves the village maids are singing,
And blend their artless songs with laughter gay;—
A herdsman old in yonder shade reposes;
And kine, knee-deep in pasture, feed at pleasure;—
Oh! fairer far than Persia's fields of roses
Is this calm scene, that memory long shall treasure;–
Elysian landscape! ere life's vision closes
May this worn heart *here* taste luxurious leisure.

DEATH.

I.

We weep and tremble at the doom---
The dreadful doom of death ;
'Tis sad amidst the fair earth's bloom
To yield this mortal breath !
The brave may sternly bear the pain
That soon must pass away,
But oh ! to think that ne'er again
Dear friends with eager hands shall greet,
Or fond hearts share Love's converse sweet,
O'erwhelms us with dismay !

II.

'Tis true that trusting faith is told
Of worlds beyond the sky,
And few there are so blind or bold
As dare such creed deny ;
It is not that an after-state,
Or dark or doubtful seems ;
Alas ! we shrink from future fate,
Because we may not brook the thought
That hours with Life's endearments fraught
Are unreturning dreams !

III.

We find each mortal bliss alloyed,
Each smile foretels a tear,
But still the breast would soon be cloyed
That never felt a fear;—
The beauty of the brightest beam
Is deepened by the shade—
Fairest the stars in darkness gleam—
The broad red sun of even-tide
Assumes a more imposing pride,
In floating clouds arrayed.

IV.

Perfection hath not reigned on earth,
Nor ruled the human mind;
We pant not for diviner worth,
Nor raptures more refined;
A mortal weakness makes us cling
To mortal forms alone.
We feel we cannot coldly fling
On Lethe's dark insatiate stream
The charms of Life's familiar dream,
And turn to scenes unknown.

V.

'Tis this that fills the final hour
With mournfulness and dread;
Love's tender ties and friendship's power
Avail not with the dead!
And though we meet to part no more,
We may not meet the same;
The things that linked our hearts of yore
Are chains that Death's cold hand divides,
For nought in holier realms abides
Of this terrestrial frame.

VI.

Thy radiant fields, Eternity!
The dreamer's breast alarm,
They echo not a human sigh,
Nor own a human charm!
Thy skies the dazzled soul appal,
And too severely glow;
Their hues no mortal days recall;
And in thy bright and boundless space,
Where only spirits dwell, we trace
No features loved below!

NIGHT.

When gentle Twilight floateth o'er the scene
On cloudy car, and with the glare of day
The busy mind's bright chaos melts away,
What tender images and thoughts serene
Steal forth like stars! And when Night's darker screen
Divides us from the world, our mortal clay
Off-drops at Fancy's touch;—earth-freed we stray
To realms more wild than haunted forests green
Where fairies love to wander. But the time,
Though hallowed with alternate light and shade
Of vision fair or solemn trance sublime,
Or memories sweet by distance dream-like made,
Is brief as precious;—at the rousing chime
Of morning birds, all these enchantments fade.

ON THE ITALIAN OPERA.

"As for operas, they are essentially too absurd and extravagant to mention. Whenever I go to an opera, I leave my sense and reason at the door with my half-guinea, and deliver myself up to my eyes and ears." -*Chesterfield.*

When the Italian Opera was first introduced into England, about the latter end of the seventeenth century, its dramatic absurdities were perpetually ridiculed by men of taste. Addison devoted several numbers of the *Spectator* to the subject, and remarked, that the success of the opera had caused it to be laid down as a general rule, "that nothing that is not nonsense is capable of being well set to music." Lord Chesterfield subsequently observed that Metastasio attempted a very dangerous innovation. "He tried," said the noble critic, "gently to throw some sense into his operas; but it did not take." If Italian operas are more popular at this day in London than the plays of Shakespeare, it is not on account of their dramatic merits, but their exquisite music, the accompanying glittering dresses and gorgeous decorations, and the wanton *ballet* with which the entertainments are concluded. These attractions, combined with the charm which John Bull invariably discovers in every thing foreign and expensive in the arts, has secured them a degree of success which works of far higher pretension, and addressed more to the mind than to the senses, have often failed to obtain.

One of the admirers of the Italian Opera, in the course of his defence of this species of amusement, makes the following observation :—

"People, it is said, do not murder each other in duett, nor do they swoon in *cadenza;* it is therefore absurd to make so preposterous an

application of an art which professes to imitate nature! In this objection the distinction betweeen physical and artificial imitation is lost sight of. The same objection might with equal justice be offered to the poetry of Homer, the landscapes of Claude, or the Venus de Medicis, none of which are to be found in nature."

I consider this objection, as far as the Opera alone is concerned, to be extremely well founded. When a man, supposed to be worked up, like Shakespeare's Moor, for example, into a terrible tempest of jealousy and rage, turns towards the audience, and modulates the whirlwind of his passion into a series of melodious quavers, he presents such an abrupt contrast between the sublime and the ridiculous, that a severer shock to reason and common sense cannot easily be conceived. The dramatic illusion is at once destroyed. It is impossible for the imagination to support it. The ear may continue to be gratified, but not the mind. In Shakespeare's dramas, on the other hand, an actor may represent nature to the life. If he is told of some hideous calamity, he is either struck mute with horror, or he gives vent to his agony in some brief and passionate exclamation. But in the Italian Opera he would be as musical as a dying swan. Regarding the Opera only as a species of drama, its absurdities are so monstrous that it seems idle to explain them. What should we think of poor old Lear lifting his dim, discrowned head against the pitiless storm, less unkind than his daughters, and singing an elaborate composition of Rossini's, accompanied by a crowded orchestra? We are to recollect also how rarely the sense, when there happens to be any, is scrupulously attended to by the musical composer. The pleasantry of Addison on this subject may be applied to most of the operas of the present day. "I have known," says he, "the word '*and*' pursued through the whole gamut, have been entertained with many a melodious '*the*,' and have heard the most beautiful graces, quavers, and divisions bestowed upon '*then*,' '*for*,' and '*from*,' to the eternal honour of our English particles."

The remark that the objection to the Opera, of a want of nature, may be offered with equal justice to "the poetry of Homer, the landscapes of Claude, or the Venus de Medicis," is not correct. They are specimens of perfect art; and the perfection of art is nature. The supposition that objects of high art are not in nature, is a great mistake. It is absurd to suppose that the characters of a drama or an heroic poem are out of nature, merely because we have no historical evidence of their existence, or because we may happen to have met with no persons in real life who are in all respects their perfect counterparts. The great artist, whether in poetry, or painting, or sculpture, copies *general* and not *individual* nature. The portrait of *Othello* is not that of an individual; it is the representation of human nature under the influence of a powerful passion. We do not ask whether Claude's pictures literally represent some particular landscapes, but whether they illustrate or correspond with that general idea which external nature leaves upon the mind. So it is with the Medicean Venus. It would be ridiculous to conclude that it is impossible such a work could be true to nature, because it was not copied from an individual model. As the whole civilized world is enchanted with that matchless statue, it may be taken as a proof that its consistency with our notions of perfect female beauty is the cause of such universal admiration; and that these notions are in some way or other derived from nature, will hardly be disputed.

We arrive at truth through the medium of the imagination. If a painter were to represent things as they *really are*, he would represent them *falsely*. This is no paradox; though it may sound like one. He would throw aside, for instance, the illusions of perspective, and bring out distant objects as largely and distinctly as the nearest. All objects are represented by the imitative arts, not by rule and measurement—not as they really are—not even as they *appear* to the ignorant and the dull, but as

they are seen by the intellectual and the imaginative, who have finer perceptions and are more observant.

Mr. Galt, in the preface to his story of "The Stolen Child," anticipates the objections of the critics to certain *improbabilities*, and exults in the reply that the story is founded on *fact*. If I understand him rightly, he also takes credit to himself for having studied *individual* and *local*, instead of *general* nature. But great artists are not such servile copyists. A study of individual models is the A. B. C. of their profession. It prepares them for the study of general nature and for original combinations. A painter is no more required to stop at these models than to confine himself to separate limbs or features. The word *invention*, as applied to the imitative arts, is by no means in opposition to truth. Mr. Galt, painfully conscious of the *improbabilities* of his own story, takes occasion to tell us "that when we hear a critic loquacious about the improbabilities of a tale, we may rely upon it that the said critic is a green-horn!" This remark is every way unworthy of an author like Mr. Galt, and he is quite mistaken if he thinks it will save him from criticism. He who is on his oath as a witness, is at liberty to startle us with strange and particular truths opposed to our general opinions and experience, but the painter and the poet are bound to preserve an air of probability, or a certain degree of consistency even in their most imaginative productions. A surveyor who has to report upon the height, length and breadth of hills and vallies, may surprise us with his literal truths; but the painter is to represent things not as they are, but as they appear. His aim is *verisimilitude* only. He is to preserve *a truth of illusion*. He is not to shock or perplex us with the odd freaks and accidents of nature. If he should take a fancy to a cloud precisely in the shape of an officer with a cocked-hat and sword, bowing to an old woman with a kettle in her hand, and insert it in his landscape, we should laugh at his justification on the ground of truth, though he were to bring a

hundred witnesses to prove that he had only represented an actual occurrence. Such a copy from *nature* would be *unnatural.* The painter in words is bound by the same rules as the painter in colours.

A writer in one of the public Journals appears to think that Pasta's influence on the passions of an audience, which equals, in his estimation, the simpler sway of Siddons, is a proof that the Italian Opera is quite as natural as the regular drama. I shall not stop to inquire whether his opinion, that the effect produced by the former in the operas of Metastasio has equalled the force of the latter in her representation of the characters of Shakespeare, be really well-founded, (though I may observe, in passing, that I greatly doubt it,) but even allowing, for the sake of the argument, that such may be the case, I still think that it by no means settles the point at issue. I am far from maintaining that the Italian Opera, with all its various adjuncts, cannot be turned into a means of stirring deep emotions, when supported by the magnificent acting and enchanting voice of the great Queen of the Lyric Drama. Though the truth of action on the stage is outraged by a lyrical accompaniment, the alliance is not injurious to the music; and the sway of music over the passions is universally admitted. We are therefore to consider whether the power and popularity of the Opera should be attributed to its musical or to its dramatic merits; for it is by no means to be taken for granted that its results are invariably derived from the combination of both. The power of music is often independent of its accidental accompaniments. Every one must have met with many instances in which, though feeble and inflated expressions have been set to natural and pathetic music, the latter has still had its legitimate effect in spite of the connection. So the truth and nature of the *music* of an Opera may in particular passages triumph over the incongruity of its accompaniments, but I think it hardly possible that this enchantment or illusion should be

sustained unbroken through a variety of scenes or for any length of time. Then again it is fair to calculate how far the genius of such an actress as Pasta might overcome even greater disadvantages than those which I have attributed to the Opera. Her own abundance of nature might supply the want of it in the Opera, and cover, like Charity, a multitude of sins. Such a Napoleon-like spirit might pass over Alpine obstructions in the realms of art as if they were level ground. She is a mighty conqueror—a glorious magician! Her sceptre is a wand that calls up nature and awakens the noblest associations, even amidst the scenes and influences of frivolity and fashion. It is more reasonable, to attribute the movements of passion in the audience to the genius of Pasta, and the beauty of the music, than to the dramatic action or poetry of the Opera. The music alone so elevates the fancy and so prepares the heart for tender or sublime impressions, that an actor who has any touch of nature in his own soul may blind the audience to the greatest incongruities, and with the irresistible aid of true music may defy the disadvantages of the most unnatural accompaniments. When the soul is raised and the heart moved by exquisite sounds and the magical effect of pageantry and splendour, combined with that mysterious feeling which the association of thousands of human beings in the same enjoyment invariably excites, it is wonderful how electrical is the slightest stroke of nature, and how even the faintest resemblance of truth may be mistaken for the reality. Thus, therefore, the success of the Opera, assisted as it has been by such unrivalled harmony—by dramatic action so natural and true as to hoodwink a large portion of an audience to the absurdity of its connection with the music—by the lascivious ballet—by many other sensual excitements and associations—and lastly, by the sovereign sway of fashion which has enlisted the vanity of the multitude in its favor,—affords no proof whatever of the justice of its pretensions to the favorable judgment of the critic when the

propriety of its heterogeneous combinations becomes the subject of dispute. Thousands attend the Opera who take no real interest either in the music or the acting, but who would dread the charge of vulgarity or a want of taste should they acknowledge their secret sentiments. It is the most aristocratic of all public amusements. It has always been conspicuously supported by our own nobility, and in other countries it has been rendered of the first importance to courtiers and men of rank and fashion by the direct patronage of government and the superintendence of kings and princes. In England the high price of tickets excludes the vulgar, so that the possession of a box at the Opera is regarded as an evidence both of wealth and of refinement. Thus it is very easy to account for the popularity of the Opera without any admission of its truth and nature. Ninety in every hundred of those who attend the Italian Opera neither understand the language of the dialogue nor the beauty of the music. Even those who can read and speak Italian cannot follow it on the stage when conjoined with music, and the music itself is often so elaborate, that none but tutored ears can fully appreciate its merits. Still, however, as there is always a kind of enchantment in music, even when it is but vaguely understood, and as it produces that state or mood of mind which is most susceptible of emotion, these influences, combined with the adventitious aids already adverted to, have sometimes produced those effects upon an audience which have been mistaken for a proof of the truth and nature of the Opera and its equality with the legitimate Drama.

Voltaire and others have attempted to trace a resemblance between the Italian Opera and the lyric drama of the Greeks, but even if this resemblance were more obvious than it really is, the opposers of the Opera could still maintain their ground, for the ancients might err in a point of taste as well as the moderns. Their introduction of gods on the stage was puerile and absurd, and nothing but the intense religious sentiment which was con-

nected with their mythological drama, preserved many of its incongruities from ridicule and contempt. Dramas formed on the Greek model have never succeeded in our own country. Augustus Schlegel has maintained that it betrays the most complete ignorance of the spirit of classical antiquity to compare the opera with the ancient drama.

It is conjectured that the opera had its rise among the Provencals in those times of ignorance and barbarism, on which we look back with no other view than to estimate the progress of improvement.

The *Quarterly Review*, under the reign of Gifford, in an able article on dramatic Literature, observes—

"Though the Italians may be said to have completely failed in dramatic composition, they may claim the honor of having invented *that incongruous compound of music, decoration and dance, the Modern Opera*—a species of entertainment truly characteristic of the frivolity of the age which is capable of preferring a spectacle, where sense and propriety are sacrificed to sound, to such productions as Macbeth and Othello, when elucidated by the genius of a Kemble or a Siddons."

Schlegel describes the Opera as an instance of "*the anarchy of the arts.*" Its "fairy world," he says, "*is* not peopled by real men, but by *a singular kind of singing creatures!*" He seems to be of Addison's opinion, that the sense of the Opera, when there is any, is of no importance, as it must be lost in the music. The language being foreign is no disadvantage, and the words "which contain the greatest number of open vowels, and distinct accents for recitative, are the best."

Hazlitt is equally caustic in his remarks upon this species of entertainment:—

"The Opera, from its constant and powerful appeals to the senses, by imagery, by sound, and motion, is well calculated to amuse or stimulate the intellectual languor of those classes of society, on whose support it immediately depends. This is its highest aim, and its appropriate use. But, without the aid of luxurious pomp, what can there be to interest in this merely artificial vehicle of show, and dance, and song, which is purposely

constructed so as to lull every effort of the understanding and feeling of the heart in the soft, soothing effeminacy of sensual enjoyment? The Opera Muse is not a beautiful virgin who can hope to charm by simplicity and sensibility; but a tawdry courtesan, who, when her paint and patches, her rings and jewels are stripped off, can excite only disgust and ridicule."

Leigh Hunt has justly ridiculed in his "Companion" the introduction on the stage of a singing Earl of Derby, singing foot-guards and a warbling sheriff. To go back again a little with my authorities, which I shall not pretend to quote in their regular order, Lord Kames, in his Elements of Criticism, in his chapter on "congruity and propriety," observes, that "the most gorgeous apparel, however improper in tragedy, is not unsuitable to Opera actors; the truth is, an Opera is a mighty fine thing; but as it *deviates from nature in its capital circumstances*, we look not for nature and propriety in those which are accessory." Lord Lyttleton, in his Persian letters, has a pleasant fling at the Opera, where in the character of a Persian he inquires, who is singing on the stage? The reply is, Julius Cæsar. What, says he in return, was Cæsar famous for singing? Pope personified and attacked the Opera in verse.

"When, lo! a harlot form soft sliding by
With mincing step, small voice, and languid eye;
Foreign her air, her robe's discordant pride
In patchwork fluttering, and her head aside;
By singing peers upheld on either hand,
She tripped and laughed, too pretty much to stand;
Cast on the prostrate Nine a scornful look
And thus in quaint recitativo spoke:
'*O Cara! Cara!*' silence all that train
Joy to great Chaos! let division reign;
* * * * * *
But soon, ah! soon, rebellion will commence,
If music meanly borrows aid from sense."

I should be ashamed to depreciate the real power and delightfulness of music; but when its votaries attempt, as they have done,

to make "odious comparisons," I feel disposed to exercise an honest discrimination, and to confess that as an imitative art, it cannot possibly compete with poetry or painting. Sound can only imitate sound, but words can represent the most subtle and complicated thoughts, and colours can preserve with perfect fidelity and clearness all the peculiarities of a landscape, or the features, the expression, the air and the attitude of a face and form. These magical and mighty triumphs are achieved by intrinsic power, unassisted and alone. But without the aid of poetry how small is the power of music as an imitative art! Unaccompanied by this interpreter, it is almost unintelligible. It is true that like one who speaks to us in an unknown tongue, it may contrive to make us sensible as to whether it is sad or merry, tranquil or excited, and awaken a sympathetic feeling or sensation; but it can convey no determinate ideas to the mind like those presented to us by the painter or the poet. Music is, upon the whole, far less intellectual than the other arts. It is indeed exquisitely delightful; but so also is "a steam of rich distilled perfumes." The chief intellectual charm or power of music is the effect of association, and this, by no means an intrinsic or peculiar merit, it possesses in common with all natural objects and with every thing that addresses itself to the senses. A particular tree or flower, or a familiar flavor, or scent, may call up as many and as sweet associations. The music that draws tears from the sternest eye when linked with some tender circumstance or emotion peculiar to the hearer, may be listened to by another individual of even greater sensibility with either the most perfect indifference or only a vague sensual pleasure. The airs that stir a whole nation with patriotic emotions, may be meaningless and ineffective in a different land. This is not the case with painting; it speaks a universal language: and it is almost the same with poetry. The check upon the universality of the latter from the necessity of translation is a mere accidental

circumstance. It is not from a similar cause that the power of music is so limited. Musical tones are like the painter's colors, and are the same in London as in Paris. They are not affected by the Babylonian curse.

Some musical composers have endeavoured to convey fixed ideas to their audience: but except in the mere imitation of natural sounds, they have, I believe, always failed. If a thousand persons were desired to interpret the precise meaning of a new musical composition that trusted for its effect entirely to its intrinsic power of expression, and was unaccompanied by words and unconnected with particular associations, the listeners would not be more numerous than the opinions. They might all agree that the music was melancholy or cheerful, simple or scientific, beautiful or sublime,—but this would be the extent of their unanimity. They might easily agree as to its general character, but not as to its particular meaning.

I almost fear that these remarks will not only be unpopular but offensive. Many of the votaries of music are so bigotted in their faith and so ardent in their temperament, that they have no toleration for those daring freethinkers who either doubt or deny the supposed attributes of their idol.

Let me, however, give music its just praise. *It cannot convey defined and fixed ideas;* but still it obtains, by whatever means, a powerfu linfluence on the passions. It kindles the imagination, and softens and subdues the heart. Of all sensual gratifications, it is the most nearly allied to those influences which operate immediately on the intellect, and by this congeniality or proximity, it exercises through the thin partition of the senses, an indirect and highly beneficial power upon the intellect itself.

To return to the critic alluded to in the early part of this article. He says that " the object of art is to produce an effect not in nature, but beyond it and superior." If nothing can be said to be in nature that is not the servile copy of individual models and

actual details, the critic is right; and the subjects of high art, are superior to nature. But this is not the case. The perfection of art is nature and nothing more. The most exquisite and refined conceptions of female loveliness that ever glowed in the mind of a Raffaelle are as true to nature as the vulgar and literal representations of a Teniers. The characteristic difference in the productions of these two artists consists not in the degree of nature which they embody, but in the kind or order of it. Raffaelle selects, generalizes, and combines his materials with consummate taste and a noble feeling for the beautiful and sublime. Teniers is content to copy nature in her humblest forms, and depends more upon his fleshly vision than his inward eye. But that high truth which men of genius arrive at through the imagination, is as much a portion of nature as the meanest detail that is obvious to the ordinary spectator. A great artist views not objects with a microscopic eye, nor subjects them to rule and measurement, nor confines his studies to individual forms or accidental circumstances; but generalizes his notions of beauty, and gathers a store of glorious images from the wide range of nature. Thus it may often happen that a common observer, who is ignorant of the less obvious charms of nature, may fancy her surpassed on the artist's canvas, because, less favored than her worshipper and representative, he has not seen her in her secret places, nor imbibed the breath and spirit of her beauty. They who have studied nature with a poet's or a painter's reverence have rarely been guilty of the almost blasphemous supposition that she is to be excelled by the work of mortal hands. The most imaginative conceptions of beauty are nothing but the reflection thrown upon the mind by the actual loveliness of nature. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, that we can no more form an idea of beauty superior to nature than we can form an idea of a sixth sense, or any other excellence out of the limits of the human mind. Burke has also maintained that the power of imagination is incapable of producing anything

absolutely new, and that it can only vary those ideas which it has received from the senses. To praise the Fornarina of Raffaelle or the landscapes of Claude on account of their out-doing nature, is a mockery of art. In both instances a competent judge recognizes that perfect truth and consistency which never could exist in any work of art that was "not to be found in nature." That which is out of nature must be unnatural. There may be mysteries in a religious creed above human reason, but there is no excellence in art which is above nature.

"Nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean; so o'er that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
Which nature makes."

Winter's Tale.

He who says he has met with no living form so lovely as the Fornarina or the Venus de Medicis, adduces no proof that such loveliness is inconsistent with actual nature. Many a lover has recognized a far finer form in the first sweet conqueror of his heart. Much depends upon the tone and character of the observer's mind. A poet or a painter sees a great deal more in a figure or a landscape than a pedant or a mathematician. Love and enthusiasm and sensibility have a wonderful effect upon the eye, and enable it to discover a thousand graces that escape a dimmer vision. Lord Byron was so struck with the superiority of living nature to the noblest works of art, that in his Don Juan he calls the whole class of sculptors "a race of mere impostors."

"I've seen much finer women ripe and real
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal.
I'll tell you why I say so, for 'tis just
One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model; and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compassed, nor less mortal chisel wrought."

The blank verse of the regular drama has been thought by some critics to be as open to objection as the singing at the Opera. Now even supposing for a moment that they are both inconsistent with truth and nature, the latter is at all events far more so than the former. Then why defend the greater sin by the lesser? But I do not admit that the blank verse of Shakespeare interferes in the slightest degree with that illusion or *vraisemblance* on the regular stage which is so constantly interrupted or destroyed by the singing at the Opera. In the first place, dramatic verse is not like heroic verse. It is freer and more flexible in its construction, and approaches almost as nearly to colloquial language as does well-written prose. The mind of the hearer is never shocked by its improbability, as it is by the singing of warriors and sages on all possible occasions, whether trivial or important. Who can forbear to smile when he hears some bloody veteran detailing his plans or breathing out his last breath upon the field of battle in a flourish of quavers? Dramatic blank verse is far more natural than the prose of Macpherson's Ossian, which almost seems to require to be chanted. Neither is the number of the feet so rigidly regulated as in other forms of verse. Dr. Johnson used to repeat with approbation the remark of some unknown critic, that blank verse is verse only to the eye, and that there are very few reciters of blank verse who enable the hearer to say where the lines end or begin. In real life, men unconsciously measure out and harmonize their language, and in this way adapt it to their several circumstances. When a man addresses a large assembly of his fellow-creatures upon some solemn and important occasion, his words are better chosen and his sentences more harmonious than when he is giving some ordinary domestic directions to his servants, or talking over the frivolous intelligence of the day; and this is not always an indication of a desire of display, but in fact more frequently arises from the deep interest which the speaker takes in his cause or subject. It is the

same in the private circle. Our tones are grave and our words are measured when we wish to be impressive or are labouring with weighty thoughts. When a person of sensibility is detailing his sorrows and misfortunes, how soft and slow is his utterance, how smooth and rythmical are his sentences! His voice is subdued into a gentle though querulous murmur, like that of the "complaining brooks." How musical are a lover's words! Shakespeare attends to these matters with "a learned spirit." In his comic scenes he often allows the verse to run into ordinary and irregular prose. His clowns speak like clowns; but when a king speaks it is with that majestic measurement of his words which we look for in the representative of dignity and power. Thus there is nothing out of nature or that serves to destroy the dramatic illusion in the blank verse of Shakespeare, but there is no authority or precedent in real life for the conjunction of music and action in the Lyric drama.

STANZAS.

OH ! sweet the sad heart's pensive night !
Though Memory's star is clouded,
Dim as the pale moon's misty light,
Or, rainbow half enshrouded !

Oh ! sweet and sad, when dark and lone,
In life's most wintry hour,
To think of early pleasures flown,
And young hope's withered flower.

There is a charm 'tis sweet to borrow
From dreams of days departed,—
There is a thrill of tender sorrow,
Dear to the mournful hearted !

SONNET—RESIGNATION.

OH ! come not, Passion, with the fiends of care,
And forms that haunt the midnight of the soul !
Raise not the fearful tempest of despair
Along my darken'd path ! Let Faith control
Rebellious thoughts and pangs that fiercely tear
The chords of life. There is a softer grief
The lone and weary heart may learn to bear,
Calm and resign'd, till quick tears yield relief
To voiceless feelings, and the bosom teems
With holy consolations. Such may be
Toss'd on the dark waves of life's stormy sea,
The good man's sorrow. Soon hope's cheerful beams
The trusting spirit from the strife shall free,
And gild the shadows of the mourner's dreams !

BATTLE SONG.

ADDRESSED TO THE BRITISH SEPOYS.

I.

OH! Warriors of India! whose hearts are with ours,
The foe is around us—the battle-cloud lowers—
But the glory of England still gleameth afar,
And the darker the tempest, the brighter her star!

II.

Oh! Warriors of India! o'er mountain and plain
Our bayonets and banners shall glitter again!
Brave comrades, unparted by colour or creed,
Together we triumph, together we bleed!

III.

Remember, remember, the deeds we have done,
The hosts we have vanquished, the name we have won,
Remember how long British glory endures,
Remember how much of that glory is yours!

IV.

Hurrah—then—hurrah! To the bright field of fame
The Persian we'll startle, the Muscovite tame,
The braggarts of Birmah, the hordes of Nepaul,
Once more shall be driven from mountain and wall!

July, 1838.

STANZAS,

WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

I.

You know not, gentle Lady, what you ask
Nor what I have to give, or you would never
Have set me this unprofitable task,
Or thought me (strange delusion!) half so clever:
I blush, and almost on distraction border,
At calls like thine for verses "made to order."

II.

And yet 'tis strange that scarce a week elapses
But lo! some album bright, (with feminine letter,)
Alarms my timid Muse. Each claim perhaps is
A compliment, and yet 'twould suit me better,
To waive it, and exchange the painful pleasure
For ease unbroken and unanxious leisure.

III.

'Tis not so much that I dislike the trouble,
For really, if your subject bard may say so,
I'd toil until I grew both faint and double
To serve the fairer sex, could I but lay so
Flattering an unction to my weary spirit
As the proud consciousness of genuine merit.

IV.

But as I positively want the power
Even to please myself, and hate to prove it,
I pass what seems a very ill-spent hour
When my tried temper fails, and fair ones move it
To something like a state of mad vexation,
By urging me to such severe probation.

V.

I find that several persons have a notion
That I can write, as ancient maidens chatter,
As easily as chemists mix a lotion,
Or lawyers make a bill, or scolds a clatter :
And if I humbly hint my incapacity
They question both my will and my veracity.

VI.

It is not till with suicidal kindness
I grant their wishes (to my shame and sorrow),
And prove beyond a doubt their partial blindness
By rhymes the meanest plagiarist would not borrow
To save his soul, that gentle maids and matrons
Desert my ranks of literary patrons.

VII.

Though at the risk of changing the opinion
Implied in your request, these hurried stanzas
Shall stand as proof of feminine dominion,
That from Don Quixotes down to Sancha Panzas,
So sways our sex that touched with sweet insanity
We play the fool with infinite urbanity.

VIII.

Who can refuse the fair ? Oh ! I for one
Feel it impossible ; you now must know it,
To your cost and to mine. The deed is done—
The page is blotted,—yet I pray you show it
To all who own an Album—all who ever
Have thought your rhyming friend unkind or clever.

SONNET.

[WRITTEN ON A VISIT TO DEVONSHIRE.]

THY pleasant valleys, groves, and verdant hills
Clothed in their summer beauty, all must own
Unrivalled in the land. But not alone
Thy rich domain, romantic Devon, thrills
Each breast with rapture and the fond eye fills
With nature's fairest hues,—a finer tone
Of fervid thought prevails, as prompt and prone
To share or kindle bliss, or brooded ills
Of darker moods to soothe, with that sweet art
Which pure and gentle spirits only know,
Thy matchless daughters hospitably smile
A welcome to the stranger—who shall throw
His farewell glance in pain, and find the while
A dear home-feeling lingering in his heart!

AUTUMN.

How sadly moans the bleak Autumnal blast
O'er faded Summer's tomb! The drifting shower
Is pattering on the lone deserted bower,
While fitfully the sear leaves rustle past.
Along the troubled sky, lo! gathering fast
In fiercely-frowning hosts, the storm-clouds lower
And shroud the struggling sun! The fearful power
Of Desolation rules, and all is overcast!
Yet mourn not, Wanderer! Though so brief hath been
The green Earth's gentle smile; though thus depart
The light and bloom of this delusive scene,
And earthly visions mock the cheated heart,
There are celestial hopes, no fate may part,
And cloudless realms eternally serene!

DRUMMOND'S POEMS.

It is well known that Ben Jonson was so great an admirer of the genius of Drummond, that he travelled on foot from London to Hawthornden*, to pay him a visit of friendship and respect. During Ben Jonson's stay with Drummond, the latter appears to have occasionally taken down memoranda of the heads of conversations on literary subjects, and to have accompanied them with remarks upon the character of his guest. About half a century after Drummond's death they found their way into print, but there is no evidence to show that he contemplated their publication. Ben Jonson's host naturally felt so great an interest in his guest, that we ought not to be surprised that he should have entered in his private diary these reports of his conversations and notices of his character. Some of the latter may be rather severe, but no one questions their truth, not even Gifford himself, though he so madly accuses Drummond of a desire to blast the memory of his friend. Jonson's manners were rough, dogmatical, and unamiable; but Drummond's were precisely the reverse†. Mr. Gifford

* The poet's residence, "Hawthornden House," was about seven miles from Edinburgh.

† "He was a tender father, a kind husband, and one who would not willingly give offence; a man of pleasing habits, alluring conversation, and strict piety. In addition, he was a methodical man, somewhat given to sallies of wit and humorous sayings. *Kept books in which he noted down the verses of other men as well as his own.* had his letters too in order; and preserved whatever struck him as clever in the remarks of his companions or correspondents, or pleased him in the compositions of his own pen."—*P. Cunningham's Life of Drummond.*

Is it at all strange that such a man and with such habits should have recorded the conversations of so celebrated a person as Ben Jonson? Would it not have been more strange if he had omitted to do so? Yet, Mr. Gifford can only attribute such an act to personal hatred: He calls Drummond "an accomplished artificer of fraud," and characterizes his conduct as the "blackest perfidy."

has given no shadow of a reason for his absurd and ungenerous assertion that Drummond "inveigled" Jonson into his house with the detestable motive he has attributed to him. As a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* has well observed, if this had been Drummond's object he would have painted Ben Jonson in colours far more hideous, and would have published his calumnies either in Jonson's life-time, towards the close of which he was comparatively imbecile and feeble and not in a condition for a literary warfare, or after his death;—for Drummond survived him nearly twelve years. I cannot conceive any reasonable cause for a hostile or malignant feeling in Drummond towards Jonson. The latter's pedestrian pilgrimage from London to Edinburgh, then regarded as a formidable undertaking, was as high a compliment as one poet could well pay to another; and while there is abundant evidence of a reciprocity of kind and cordial sentiment between these distinguished men, there is nothing that can be construed into the slightest indication of an opposite feeling, except Drummond's character of Jonson, which (though drawn with that freedom which almost of itself implies that it was not intended for publication, and those vivid and minute touches that a close intimacy with his subject and a subtle observation would naturally inspire), exhibits nothing like jealousy or falsehood, and betrays no motive that is inconsistent with the reputation for integrity and honour which Drummond is acknowledged to have enjoyed in his life-time, and that nobility of mind which may still be traced in the works which have so long survived him. It is strange that Drummond's notes upon the character of a celebrated contemporary should be so harshly censured by a modern critic, at a time when a similar practice is so generally tolerated,—when the minutest actions and the most trivial observations of men of eminence are so commonly recorded by their literary associates,—and when the private history and the personal peculiarities not only of the dead but of the living,

are to be met with in every periodical that is adapted to the public taste*.

It is said that Ben Jonson wrote a poem descriptive of his journey to Scotland, which was inadvertently burned with other papers at his death. Perhaps this accident is unfortunate for the memory of Drummond, and the poem might have included much interesting and valuable evidence as to the manner in which these two eminent contemporaries met and parted.

With respect to the character of Drummond's poetry, the critics are at variance. Phillips, the nephew of Milton, who is supposed to have often echoed the sentiments of his immortal relative, speaks of Drummond's sonnets in the following terms.

"To say that these poems are the effects of a genius the most polite and verdant that ever the Scottish nation produced, although it be a re-

* There never was a period in which eminent literary men were half so *public* as they are now. No sooner is the breath out of the body of a man of letters, than all his domestic circumstances are as regularly published as his works. Even his female relatives are sometimes severely criticised. Mr. Coleridge's minutest private actions, and all his personal habits and infirmities, are detailed and criticised in newspapers and magazines with quite as much freedom as matters connected more immediately with his public character. His host, Mr. Gilman, does not hesitate to publish to all the world the most confidential communications of his guest and friend. Even in their lives are literary men denied the usual privacies and sanctities of the domestic circle. All their friends and visitors are spies and reporters, and the frank conversations that other men are permitted by the usages of respectable society to indulge in, without the slightest danger of publicity, are esteemed fair game by every literary speculator who is desirous of publishing a book or gaining a few guineas by a gossiping and attractive article in a monthly magazine. Whether this system be strictly honorable or fair I shall not stop to inquire. That the public is a gainer there can be little doubt, and perhaps there is no lover of literary history who has not deeply regretted the personal obscurity of our earlier English writers. Shakespeare, the greatest of all our authors, is known only by his works, and they are for the most part necessarily of a nature so little egotistical that they afford us but few and faint glimpses of his character as a man. The bare mention of his immortal name by a contemporary writer, is regarded with eager interest; but how unspeakably precious would be the discovery of a Boswellian biography of William Shakespeare!

commendation not to be rejected, (for it is well known that that country hath afforded many rare and admirable wits,) yet it is not the highest that can be given him; for should I affirm that neither Tasso nor Guarini, nor any of the most neat and refined spirits of Italy, nor even the choicest of our English poets, can challenge to themselves any advantages above him, it could not be judged any attribute superior to what he deserves."

But these sentiments are evidently the original and exclusive property of Phillips himself; for it is not to be credited that Milton, however he may have recognised the real merits of Drummond, would have sanctioned such extravagant commendation. Thomas Campbell is very indignant at the comparison of Drummond with Tasso; though Mr. Pinkerton, the "modern writer" to whom he alludes in his "Specimens of the British Poets," is scarcely less laudatory than Phillips. "If any poems," observes Mr. Pinkerton, "possess a very high degree of that exquisite Doric delicacy which we so much admire in Comus, &c., those of Drummond do. Milton may often be traced in him; and he had certainly read and admired him. And if he had not read Drummond, perhaps we should never have seen the delicacies of Comus, Lycidas, Il Penseroso, and L'Allegro." "*Perhaps*," says Campbell, "is an excellent leading-string for weak assertions;" and he insists upon it that only one or two epithets of Drummond may be recognized in Milton. Campbell seems to be almost as ill-disposed towards poor Drummond as Gifford himself, though from a very different cause. Gifford's anger is an editorial weakness. He regards every attack upon the poet whom he has undertaken to illustrate, as a personal concern of his own. He confounds himself with his author. Campbell, I suspect, is influenced by two circumstances,—first, his aversion to Drummond's Tory politics; and secondly, a want of respect for the poet's favourite form of composition—the sonnet. He sneers at Drummond's grief for the death of Charles the First, and describes his "Lives of the James's of Scotland" as a work abounding in false eloquence and slavish principles. I am not

disposed to say a word in favour of Drummond's politics, which have nothing whatever to do with his poetical genius; nor to defend his historical work, which indeed I never read: but it is a curious fact worth noticing, that though now utterly forgotten, it had once its enthusiastic admirers. Horace Walpole describes Drummond as " one of the best modern historians, and no mean imitator of Livy."

There are certainly passages in Drummond's poetry, the style and tone of which seem to have suggested some of the poetry of Milton, who, though he did not perhaps rate Drummond so highly as some have done, appears to have read him with attention and delight. There is an Italian air in much of the poetry of Drummond that would naturally be pleasing to an Italian scholar like Milton. Dr. Symmons, in speaking of the poet of Hawthornden as the earliest writer of the *true* Sonnet, observes that he was " the peculiar object of Milton's applause and imitation." The author of Paradise Lost, however, in no instance condescended to become an imitator in which he did not immeasurably excel his models. His feeling for the beautiful and the true was so generous and ardent, that he would recognize merit even in less worthy pages than those of Drummond; but he invested the thoughts of others with the light of his own master-spirit, and gave them a glory which belonged originally to himself. Drummond has not been imitated by Milton alone. The comparative obscurity into which he has fallen, and the undeniable beauty of his productions, have tempted many modern authors to rifle his poetic treasures. Pope has not only stolen his thoughts, but imitated his versification. In his Eloisa to Abelard is the following line:

" The crime was common, common be the pain."

This is a very close imitation of the first line of one of Drummond's sonnets:

" The grief was common, common were the cries."

I shall give but one more example, though I could easily multiply such evidences of Pope's debt to Drummond.

"To virgins, flowers; to sunburnt earth, the rain;
To mariners, fair winds amidst the main;
Cool shades to pilgrims, which hot glances burn,
Are not so pleasing as thy blest return."

Pope's Pastorals.

"Not bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,
Not balmy sleep to laborers faint with pain;
Not showers to larks, or sunshine to the bee,
Are half so charming as thy sight to me."

Drummond's Fourth Feasting.

Gray also seems to have read and imitated him.

"Far from the madding worlding's hoarse discords."

Drummond.

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

Gray's Elegy.

It was Drummond's poem of *Fourth Feasting* of which Ben Jonson envied him the authorship. It is not, however, his miscellaneous poems which are now the most admired. In these he has many superiors, but there are few early writers of the Anglo-Italian sonnet who may be compared with him in that particular class of composition. With the exception of the illegitimate couplet close, the disposition of the rhymes is after the strict Italian model. Though quite Petrarchan in their tone, they also occasionally evince the author's admiration of the style of his English predecessors and contemporaries. It is certain that he was familiar with the Sonnets of Shakespeare; for in his list of books read by him in 1606 he gives the "Passionate Pilgrim," which was the title of our great Dramatic Bard's first collection of sonnets. This was no doubt the surreptitious edition published by Jaggard in 1599. The Rev. Alexander Dyce, in his Aldine edition of Shakespeare's poems, erroneously asserts that they were *first* printed in 1609. Drummond's sonnets are superior to Shakespeare's *as sonnets*, however inferior to them *as poems:* that is to say, they are more rigidly constructed according to

the laws of the sonnet, and have more unity and point, and are altogether better finished; but they have less richness and originality of thought, and comparatively few of those bold felicities of expression in which Shakespeare surpasses all other poets. Considered merely as sonnets, they are almost equal to those of Milton and of Wordsworth; but they have neither the sublime energy of the one, nor the profound sentiment of the other. Nor are they, indeed, so strictly legitimate in the disposition of rhymes. But in grace, ingenuity, delicacy, and tenderness, they are not surpassed by any sonnets in the language. Drummond may justly be styled the British Petrarch. Not only in his sonnets, but in many of his smaller pieces in different forms of verse, his style is quite Petrarchan. They read like free translations from the Italian.

It is much to be regretted that Drummond did not regularly translate the whole of Petrarch's sonnets. No British poet could have done them more justice. Mr. Campbell would say that we have sonnets enough already in the English language; and as far as their number only is referred to, I should agree with him; but this elegant exotic has perhaps not yet been brought to perfection in our own country, and both its intrinsic merits and the labors of its cultivators have been often very unfairly treated by the critics, notwithstanding the authority in its favor of such names as Shakespeare, Drummond, Milton, and Wordsworth.

The old comparison of the sonnet to the bed of Procrustes, was, if I mistake not, first used by Ben Jonson, and it has been regularly repeated by every opponent of the sonnet since his time. The objection to its limits has been successfully answered by an explanation that it equally applies to all other forms of verse. There must be a limit of some kind or other; and it would be difficult to give a reason why Spenser's favorite stanza is restricted to nine lines that would not be equally cogent in defence of Petrarch's stanza of fourteen. A sonnet does not necessarily

stand alone any more than a Spenserian stanza, and a long poem may be constructed of the one as well as of the other. It has been found, indeed, that the sonnet on account of its greater length may be more easily rendered independent and complete in itself than the Spenserian stanza, which, however, is subjected to much the same rules. The sense ought to conclude with the last line, which should wind up with point, emphasis, and fulness. A fresh subject cannot properly be introduced into the middle of it. It is the opinion of the Italian critics, that a single sentiment or emotion may be more happily developed in a sonnet than in any other form of verse: and it seems as if its limits were particularly well calculated for the purpose. If it were longer, the leading idea would be weakened by too much diffusion; and if it were shorter, there might be too much compression and a consequent failure in point of perspicuity and completeness.

The Sonnet was very popular in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and subsequently in that of Elizabeth. Our poetry owes this form of verse to Italy, to whom England was indebted, so early as the time of Edward the Third, for many other elegant additions to her literature. Chaucer borrowed largely from Bocaccio, who has been rather impudently pillaged by the majority of our story-tellers in metre. Petrarch was not much imitated by our poets before the time of Wyatt and Surrey, who made the sonnet fashionable. Though Shakespeare is not supposed to have been an Italian scholar, it is certain that he made very free use in his plays of the plots of many Italian novels, of which rude translations into English were abundant. His own sonnets, however, are not of an Italian cast. When the passion for Italian poetry declined, and with Charles the Second came in a taste for the wits of France, the Sonnet was almost abandoned, and so late as the time of Dr. Johnson it was spoken of with great contempt. Johnson himself, in noticing Milton, paid his own language so bad a compliment as to suppose that it was utterly impossible to

naturalize a form of verse requiring so much flexibility of diction and variety of rhyme. With a revived taste for our old Elizabethan poets, we have again reverted to the cultivation of the Sonnet, and with a degree of success which proves that any failure on the part of individuals is not to be attributed so much to the poverty or stiffness of our language, as to a want of skill in the artist who has to work with such a noble though ill-appreciated instrument. The most Petrarchan sonnets in the time of Elizabeth or James, were undoubtedly those of Drummond; and though they have lost their popularity, they are resorted to by the poetical student, who can still read them with delight. It is evident that Drummond was a careful and reverential student of Petrarch. In our own time, the most celebrated sonnets are those of Wordsworth, which are often very exquisite both in thought and diction, though occasionally somewhat deficient in unity and point. Wordsworth has translated only two or three Italian sonnets, but has written a very great number of original ones, and has very clearly shown, that the golden fetters of rhyme can be worn almost as gracefully by an English as by an Italian poet*.

* Of all the translators of Petrarch (of which there is quite a host) the most elegant and faithful is Lady Dacre. In the literary circles of London, a few specimens of her translations, have been spoken of with unbounded admiration, and occasionally the public journals have alluded to them with great respect. But with a rare modesty her ladyship has hitherto refused to collect and lay them before the public, with the exception of a few begged from her by Ugo Foscolo, for his highly elegant and interesting Essays on Petrarch, which were presented to her ladyship with a very complimentary dedication. "I am prompted," says Foscolo, "to inscribe these pages with your ladyship's name, as well by my own gratitude, as by the opinion of those distinguished literary characters, whose kind assistance, *surpassed only by yours*, has enabled me to present my Essays to the English reader. *With one voice and with national pride they pronounce that your poetry has preserved the very spirit of Petrarch* with a fidelity hardly to be hoped for and certainly unattained by any other translation." This is high praise, and from high authority. Mr. Matthias, Mr. Pannizi and others, have expressed themselves in similar terms, of Lady Dacre's translations. All the praises, however, that her ladyship received, could not induce her to

To the mere versifier who possesses a ready command of rhymes and a store of poetical common-places, there is no form of composition that appears more easy, but which in reality is more difficult than the Sonnet. If apt rhymes and a poetical diction were all that is requisite, the task would indeed be easy after a very little practice. But the mechanical difficulties of the Sonnet have been ridiculously overrated, while its higher essentials have been almost entirely overlooked. Dr. Johnson's decision respecting what he deemed the inapplicability of the English language to the fabric of the Sonnet, has been most triumphantly disproved by several of our living writers. The sonnets of Wordsworth, in particular, may be referred to as a noble illustration of the flexibility of our language, for it is quite evident from their perfect ease and freedom that the poet found no difficulty in attending to the strictest Italian models. When Johnson remarked that the Sonnet had never succeeded in our language, he had read, or ought to have read, the sonnets of Drummond, and those of Milton were immediately before him. Shakespeare's sonnets cannot be adduced as bearing upon our present argument, because though full of fancy and feeling, they are mere quartorzians or fourteen lines divided into three stanzas of alternate rhymes, and a concluding couplet, and their sole claim to the title of Sonnets consists in their being of the required length.

But Milton's sonnets, independent of their poetical merits, are entitled to great praise for their mechanical construction, and their strict accordance to the laws and practice of the Italian poets; and Dr. Johnson never fell into a greater error of judgment than when he pronounced these little poems of the author of Paradise Lost to be "undeserving of particular criticism." "Of the best," he says, "it can only be said that *they are not bad*, and perhaps

publish them, though at the earnest entreaty of learned and tasteful friends she at last printed a few copies for *private distribution*. In 1836 she printed a second and larger collection, but also exclusively for her friends.

only the eighth and the twenty-first are entitled to *this slender commendation.*" The blindness or prejudice of this decision is absolutely amazing. We turn to the pages of Milton, and take almost at random, a couple of his Sonnets. These (the 18th and 19th) are amongst those excluded from the honor of Dr. Johnson's "slender commendation." According to him, therefore, they are positively bad!

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
E'en them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. The moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learned the way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask: but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

That any man setting himself up as a critic should be utterly insensible to the poetical and impassioned spirit, the masculine

tone, and the severe beauty of Milton's sonnets, is indeed surprising. Johnson's contemptuous notice of them is only equalled in absurdity and injustice by the flippant insolence of Steevens respecting those of Shakespeare, which he had the audacity to assert were "written in the highest strain of affectation, pedantry, circumlocution and nonsense."

I shall now give a few specimens of Drummond's genius in this class of compositions. I dare say that they will be "as good as manuscript" to some of my readers; and those who have perused them before, will assuredly have no objection to meet with them again.

The following is elegant and compact, and does not read as if it had been written about two hundred years ago.

" HUMAN FRAILTY.

A good that never satisfies the mind,
A beauty fading like the April flow'rs,
A sweet with floods of gall that runs combin'd,
A pleasure passing ere in thought made ours,
A honour that more fickle is than wind,
A glory at opinion's frown that lowers,
A treasury which bankrupt time devours,
A knowledge than grave ignorance more blind,
A vain delight our equals to command,
A style of greatness, in effect a dream;
A swelling thought of holding sea and land,
A servile lot, deck'd with a pompous name;
Are the strange ends we toil for here below,
Till wisest death make us our errors know.

Almost every poet may echo the sentiment of the next sonnet.

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought
In Time's great periods shall return to nought;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
With toil of sprite, which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few, or none are sought;
That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.

I know frail beauty's like the purple flow'r
To which one morn oft birth and death affords,
That love a jarring is of mind's accords,
Where sense and will bring under reason's power :
Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
But that, alas, I both must write and love.

The smart antithetic style of the ensuing, shews great facility and power of versification.

Fair is my yoke, though grievous be my pains,
Sweet are my wounds, although they deeply smart,
My bit is gold, though shorten'd be the reins,
My bondage brave, though I may not depart ;
Although I burn, the fire which doth impart
Those flames, so sweet reviving force contains,
That like Arabia's bird my wasted heart,
Made quick by death, more lively still remains.
I joy, though oft my waking eyes spend tears,
I never want delight, even when I groan,
Best 'companied when most I am alone,
A heaven of hopes I have 'midst hell of fears ;
Thus every way contentment strange I find,
But most in her rare beauty, my rare mind.

The line in italics has been often imitated. Milton is amongst the imitators.

For solitude is sometimes best society.

There is infinite grace and beauty in the following address to Sleep.

Sleep, Silence' child, sweet father of soft rest,
Prince whose approach peace to all mortals brings,
Indifferent host to shepherds and to kings,
Sole comforter of minds which are oppress'd,
Lo, by thy charming rod, all breathing things
Lie slumb'ring, with forgetfulness possess'd,
And yet o'er me to spread thy drowsy wings
Thou sparest, alas ! who cannot be thy guest.
Since I am thine ; O come, but with that face
To inward light which thou art wont to shew,

With feigned solace ease a true felt woe;
Or if, deaf god, thou do deny that grace,
 Come as thou wilt, and what thou wilt bequeath,
 I long to kiss *the image of my death.*

This sonnet seems to have been suggested by Sir Phillip Sidney's on the same subject. The third line of Drummond's sonnet is like the fourth of Sidney's.

"Come Sleep—O Sleep, the certain knot of peace!
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low!"
Sir Philip Sidney.

Mr. Cunningham's new edition of Drummond's Poems is enriched with several of his sonnets never before published, procured from the Antiquarian Society of Edinburgh, and illustrated with notes by David Laing.

THE DESERTED MAID.

She once was beautiful—but secret shame,
Despairing love, and unavailing woe,
Have wrought a fearful change! The ceaseless flow
Of unregarded tears hath worn her frame,
And made her heart a ruin. Still the flame
Of quenchless passion lights her pallid brow
With fierce unnatural radiance. Wildly now,
She haunts the scenes where first the false youth came
With music-breathing vows. The forest bowers,
The sheltered valleys, and sequestered streams,
The mossy caves, and ivy-mantled towers,
Oft soothe awhile the Maiden's calmer dreams;
But, ah! too soon, o'er Reason's fitful gleams,
The murky cloud of maddening frenzy lours!

TO CALUMNY.

Oh, hideous Fiend! at whose malignant breath
Life's fairest blossoms wither and decay—
Dread minister of sorrow and dismay!
The pale and livid countenance of death
Is welcome as the presence of a friend
To those sad hearts thy tortures lacerate!—
Fierce child of Envy and delirious Hate!
At their decree thy willing fingers rend
The chords of Love, or tear the wreath of Fame.
The boldest breast, that ever bared its front
In proud defiance to the battle's brunt,
Would dread thy secret and unerring aim,
And bear but ill the keen, envenomed dart
That wakes the soul's immedicable smart!

HOME-YEARNINGS.

[WRITTEN IN INDIA, IN SICKNESS AND AFFLICTION.]

I.

In every change of fortune or of clime,
In every stage of man's uncertain lot,
The more endeared by distance and by time,
Affection's sacred home is unforgot.
There lives the spell that wakes the sweetest tear
In feeling's eye, and cheers the troubled brow;
There dwells each joy the tender heart holds dear;
There ties are formed that none may disavow;—
And cold is he to nature's finer sway,
Who doomed to wander, weeps not on his way!

II.

From that dear circle peace will never fly,
While love and tender sympathy remain
To foil the glance of care's malignant eye,
And render powerless the hand of pain.
The restless throng that haunt ambition's shrine,
And madly scorn the sweet domestic sphere,
Condemned ere long, in shame and grief to pine,
And curse their wild and profitless career,
From envy's scowl, and flattery's hollow strain,
Turn in despair, and seek repose in vain!

III.

Queen of the Nations! Island of the brave!
Home of my youth! and idol of my heart!
Though far beyond the broad Atlantic wave,
My boundless love shall but with life depart.

Yet farewell all that brightens and endears !
  Forms of domestic joy, a long adieu !
These withered plains but wake my ceaseless tears ;
  These foreign crowds my fond regrets renew ;
For lone and sad, from friends and kindred torn,
My path is dreary, and my breast forlorn !

IV.

Star of the wanderer's soul ! Unrivalled Land !
  Hallowed by many a dream of days gone by !
Though distant far, thy charms my thoughts command,
  And gleam on fancy's sad reverted eye.
And though no more my weary feet may stray
  O'er thy green hills, or down each flowery vale,
Where rippling streams beneath the bright sun play,
  And throw their gladdening music on the gale,
There are fond hopes that will not all depart,
'Till Death's cold fingers tear them from the heart !

V.

Vain, faithless visions ! 'Mid each earthly ill,
  The soul can darken, or the bosom wring,
Why haunt ye thus the lonely mourner still,
  And fitful radiance o'er life's ruins fling ?
Meteors that cross my solitary way,
  Oh ! cease to mock the tempest of despair !
Scourge of the clime ! pale Sickness holds her sway,
  And bids my lacerated heart prepare
To meet in foreign lands the wanderer's doom—
An early fate, and unlamented tomb !

SONNET—LIFE.

Oh ! what a fearful mystery is life
When dark unuttered thoughts to bliss succeed !
Awhile my dreaming soul was calm, and freed
From doubt and care, and passion's feverish strife ;
The wide world glowed in fancy's mellow light
Like evening landscapes in the golden sun ;
But now, as night-clouds when the day is done,
Funereal shadows crowd upon my sight !
I dare not look before me nor behind,
And start at every sound ;—I feel alone,
Though not unloved,—for who at such an hour
May comprehend or mingle with the mind
Struggling with visions dread ?—Alas ! no tone
Of human voice hath then a soothing power !

SONNET*.

Well may that gentle Mother's heart be proud,
And those glad looks to friendship's eye appeal
To own how fair her treasures ! They can feel,
And they alone, that shun the restless crowd
Whom gain's false glare or glory's clarion loud
From calm delights and home-enchantments steal,
How little for all other wealth or weal
Her heart need sigh while richly thus endowed.
'Let but the sun of joy serenely shine
On those sweet human flowers, and Fortune's brow
May change unheeded—she can ne'er repine ;—
While thus their bright eyes gleam, their fresh cheeks glow,
Her bliss maternal seemeth half-divine—
The holiest that a mortal breast may know !

* Written to illustrate an engraving in the Bengal Annual of a mother surrounded by her children.

POLITICAL SKETCHES.

TORYISM—RADICALISM—WHIGGISM.

[The following Sketches were written for a Calcutta Periodical, and were intended as *a kind of squib or satire* to illustrate the violent prejudices of Political parties against each other. *I should be sorry to be thought to write in my own character in either of these sketches.* Each article is to be regarded as the production of an hostile party.]

TORYISM.

By a Whig.

A Tory has no public virtue. He is selfish, mercenary and illiberal. He has no generous impulses, for they are inconsistent with his duty. He is like a man who has sold himself to the devil. His soul is not his own. He must watch the countenance of Power, and make his features obedient to the emotions of other men. He has no opinions. He "thinks that he is thinking," when he is only acting as a bare recipient of the thoughts of others. In the late King's* time a Tory's countenance was the glass of Royalty. As his Majesty could turn to no side of his state apartments, without finding his figure fifty times repeated in the mirrored walls, so the Royal mind in all its different moods was reflected in the faces of his parasites. A Tory is of necessity a slave, for who but a slave could look upon a fellow-creature, however high his political position, with that utter prostration of spirit which is required in the worshipper of Princes. A King according to a Tory, can do no wrong. He is infallible in all things. It is blasphemy even to speak of a King's natural infirmities. Lord Castlereagh was shocked at the *Examiner* for denying that a Prince of 50 years of age was an Adonis; and the Editor was cast into a jail for two years, as a slight punishment

* George the Fourth.

for his audacity. A true Tory would almost as soon question the purity of his Creator as of his King. Mr. Croly, a clergyman, thinks the character of the late King* immaculate, and has written a book to prove it. Tories would disinherit their children for the vices which are graceful in a King. George the Fourth who (when Prince Regent) was expelled from a Sporting Club for a mean and disgraceful imposition; who was an adulterer, a gambler, a drunkard, and a cruel husband, has always been spóken of by the most puritanical Tories with a profound respect! Mr. Southey, in one of his Laureate Odes, was not ashamed to call upon the Princess Charlotte to follow in the foot-steps of her father! He could think of no purer model of propriety and morals!

> "Look to thy Sire, and in HIS STEADY WAY,
> *As in his Father's he*, learn *thou* to tread."

What amazes an honest man is the brazen-facedness with which people who most affect a moral squeamishness in other matters, will sing the praises of a regal reprobate and defend the worst crimes of a Tory Ministry. The writers in a Tory Periodical, who held up Shelley and others to the execration of mankind on account of their religious opinions, do not hesitate to defend every possible vice of which a Ruler may be guilty. There is an acrimony, an intolerance, an almost demoniacal ferocity in these champions of orthodoxy, which is in startling contrast to the character of the religion they profess. Nothing can be more violently opposed to the precepts and example of their divine Master, than the bitter and unrelenting spirit of their opposition to all those who have sufficient virtue and energy to say a good word or to strike a generous blow in the cause of freedom and mankind. Southey's attack on Byron and the detestable personalities of the *Age* and the *John Bull* may be referred to as exhibitions of genuine Toryism. Can such moral assassins, can such slavish

* George the Fourth.

adulators of the great, be tolerated by men of liberal and independent minds? Can men who have a native purity of heart or rectitude and dignity of understanding extend forgiveness to those who *systematically* oppose the greatest happiness of the greatest number—who *systematically* defend the vilest actions of men in power—and who *systematically* support every ancient corruption and abuse?

It is wonderful how the Tories have contrived to hold up their heads for so long a period, in defiance of every nobler impulse of the human heart. It strikes one with astonishment to hear a man, apparently anxious to obtain the good opinion of those around him, avow a Tory creed. He would scarcely do worse if he were to confess himself an atheist. To profess Toryism is to profess a belief in the infallibility of Kings—a determination to support the few against the many—an opposition to all liberal and enlightened measures—a jealousy of the Press—a hatred of civil and religious freedom—a contempt for the poor, and an unbounded idolatry of power! Toryism fades before the advance of liberty and knowledge. It is like an obscene thing that revels in darkness, and is frightened at the approach of day. It lives and breathes, and has its being only in darkness and corruption. "*The March of Intellect,*" is never spoken of by a Tory unaccompanied with bitter execrations or a burst of hysterical laughter.

"Oh! sound of fear
Unpleasing to a Tory's ear!"

Out of compliment to "the powers that be," the Tories attempt to check the progress of "this majestic world." They forget that Canute could not stop the waves that broke at his regal feet. They are like dame Partington with her mop—driving back the Atlantic. The mere fact that the Tories have been compelled to retreat, not by the manœuvres of a particular political party, but by the impetuous energy of the public mind, roused and enlightened by the Free Press and a fresh spirit of inquiry, is of itself an

overwhelming condemnation of their doctrines and their conduct. They have long carried every thing before them with a high hand; but their reign is past. The last drop of bitterness has made the cup to overflow, and mankind will no longer be oppressed and insulted with impunity by sycophants, corruptionists, and tyrants. The whole spirit of literature, politics, and social life is diametrically opposed to all their views and habits. If Toryism had been suffered to obtain an undisputed influence over the destinies of nations, human nature would have experienced almost as severe a curse as that which drove our first parents from the gardens of Paradise. No reform—no improvement in morals, politics, or religion would have gained its sanction. "*The Wisdom of our Ancestors*" would have descended wholly unaffected by newly discovered truths. We should have still burned witches and tortured heretics. To carry back the speculation to remoter periods, we should have regarded even our Saviour himself as a blasphemer against an established religion. "Whatever is, is right. Let nothing already established be altered.—Our ancestors were wiser than we are. No innovation! No new doctrines! What has long been believed in by the wisest of our forefathers *must* be true! Let us *fear* God, but *honor* the King. A King can do no wrong"—these are the watchwords of Toryism! It is glorious to observe how this bigotry, despotism and meanness is passing away, like the morning mist, before the light of knowledge. As of all the influences that have operated in producing this magnificent change, we are most indebted to the inestimable blessings of a Free Press; these remarks shall be followed by a tribute to its merits from Richard Brinsley Sheridan, one of the most brilliant of British Orators.

"*Give me but the liberty of the Press, and I will give to the minister a venal house of peers;—a corrupt and servile house of commons,—the full swing of office patronage,—the whole host of ministerial influence,—all the power that place can confer to purchase*

submission and overawe resistance,—and yet, armed with the liberty of the Press, I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared with that mightier engine,—I will shake it down from its corrupt height, and bury it beneath the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter!"

WHIGGISM.

A Whig is a nondescript animal. He is neither fish, nor flesh, nor good red-herring. He is one of

"Those half-formed things we know not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal."

To define his character in a single sentence or by a single epithet, as you might that of a Tory or a Radical, is impossible. By taking him, however, in his various aspects, and by hitting off his different traits by repeated strokes, the result may yield a characteristic though vague portrait of this political cameleon. He changes with every changing light. He is a trimmer; and as much as a politician can be, he is all things to all men. He is suspected, accordingly, by all parties; for indecision and lukewarmness in politics are as objectionable as the same qualities in friendship or religion. In great public struggles they who are not with us are against us. We trust not those who go from camp to camp and hoist neutral colours. A want of fervour and boldness in times of political excitement is less easily forgiven than even the extravagance of an opposing party; for it implies a sneaking and cowardly design to obtain some pitiful personal advantage, combined with a perfect indifference to the general good. A Whig has no touch of patriotism; he is his own idol; his own reputation and his own place are the sole objects of his care. He therefore prudently avoids offending the majority by an open avowal of servile maxims, and yet soothes the ear of Royalty with sentiments of loyal regard. No party can accuse him of *ultraism*, and to maintain this equivocal merit and to avoid all palpable cause of offence to either side, he is

"Content to dwell in decencies for ever."

Thus the people cannot accuse him of any positive opposition to the cause of liberty, and the Tories acquit him of the vulgarities of Radicalism. His reception, however, is of course not very cordial from either party. He is received with doubtful politeness at Court, and is only not pelted at the hustings. Those imbecile heads and cool hearts that dare not take one side of the question from a dread of opposition from the other, or an apathetic indifference to both, may contrive to get through the world with a kind of negative credit and success, but can never aspire to the love or admiration of mankind. As he always saves appearances and presents no points of repulsion, a Whig may be allowed the character of a *respectable* man, but he can never be a great one. His qualities are too vague and his conduct too cautious to excite any warmth of censure or approval. There can be no question that the Whigs, independent of their misgovernment, whenever they have wriggled themselves into power, have done more injury to the cause of truth and freedom than either the Radicals or the Tories, because by affecting to act as moderators between extreme parties they have in reality mystified sober and impartial people, by artfully attracting attention from higher objects to their own petty views and selfish interests. Thus the vital points of difference that fired the friends of truth and freedom against the advocates of despotism and corruption were long obscured by the misty and undefinable mass of Whig interests, prejudices and arguments, that were brought into play between the two great opposing parties. If these pitiful go-betweens—these miserable marplots had not lingered on the arena, we should not have waited so many centuries for the great political triumphs of the present times. The tyrants and serviles may thank the Whigs for having so long warded off their evil day. If there had been nothing to check the collision of the extreme parties, the battle must have been decided at a blow.

Thus a true patriot has cause to hate the Whigs more heartily than either the demagogues of Radicalism, or the despots of Toryism. These parties have at least a bold and gallant bearing, and if they err greatly, their errors are not so disgusting as the errors of the cowardly and the calculating. If the Radical is a political adventurer and the Tory a tyrant, they are at all events not sneaks and waverers. Whatever may be their object they could not fight better in the noblest cause. The great battle has been very toughly and bravely contested on both sides. If the Tories had triumphed, it would have been through the indirect though perhaps unintentional assistance of the Whigs: but no gratitude would have been due to the latter even from the conquerors, who would have still regarded them with the same civil contempt which they receive from the rest of mankind. Nothing can palliate the sin of Whiggism, but some natural defect, such as a want of feeling and imagination. They who possess either of these qualities cannot preserve a cold and cautious neutrality when the interests of millions are at stake. To avoid extremes on such occasions is only possible to the cold-blooded or the designing. The happy medium in politics is as difficult to hit as the apple of William Tell, and as men in general cannot be so confident of their skill as that celebrated archer, this middle mark is attempted only by those men of iron temperament and callous bosoms whose nerves never vibrate with generous emotions.

RADICALISM.

By a Tory.

"We see a band called patriot for no cause
But that they catch at popular applause."—*Cowper.*

"Patriotism," said Dr. Johnson, "is the last refuge of a scoundrel." And so it is; in the same way that religion is the

most convenient cloak for hypocritical impiety. The greater the sinner the greater the saint. A Radical Reformer is a ruffian who is only restrained from acts of treasonable violence by the force of law or government*. The new appellation of a *Destructive* is highly applicable to him. Under the plea of the natural rights of man, and with a pretended respect for the doctrine of general equality, he would fain produce the most hideous chaos and convulsion in all the elements of society.

" *Licence* he means when he cries *liberty!*"

With the Radical *whatever is, is wrong!* He looks around him at all times and in all seasons in dismal discontent. He is guilty of what Milton calls " a sullenness against nature." He follows the example of his leader, Satan, the first great Radical. He hates all superior power, and while affecting to care only for the general liberty of mankind, he is considering how he may build his own individual rise on the ruins of an existing system. He is a mere demagogue, who uses the watchwords of Truth and Freedom in the same spirit in which bigots cant about faith and salvation. The nonsensical gabble about the natural equality of mankind is a mere clap-trap. The Radical is less fool than knave, and knows very well that two men cannot be two minutes together without giving the lie to such a doctrine. It serves, however, to feed the gross and greedy vanity of that many-headed monster, the mob. The expressions of respect and admiration and sympathy with which the latter are treated by men who in their hearts thoroughly despise and detest them, is unutterably disgusting. Of all the cants that are canted in this canting world, the cant of *Patriotism* is the worst! It originates in a bitter jea-

* A London critic, after much generous praise of the Calcutta edition of this work, quotes the above sentence with the following remark:—" This is as illiberal as it is untrue, and calculated to prejudice persons against the writer; and if the work be reprinted in England, he would do well to expunge it." The critic could not have read the cautionary notice which was at the head of these sketches, and which is now repeated. The sentiment objected to is not mine.

lousy of superior wealth and power. It is a burning thirst for place. It has its birth and breath and being in the worst elements of the human heart. It is suggested and fed by the meanest and wildest passions of our nature. The Radical is a malcontent from first to last, and systematically opposes every measure of Government, good or bad.

"The hope to please him, vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder, *if he can!*"

The man who is discontented with himself, with his fellow-creatures and with his God, is sure to turn a Radical; as bad poets turn into bitter critics, and bad wine into vinegar. All deists, atheists and misanthropists are by nature, Radicals. Observe that portion of the Press which professes to be the organ of the Radical party—it is decidedly infidel and churlish. The Radical writers are never so well pleased as when they have an opportunity of attacking the clergy, or of

"Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer."

Bishops and Kings are their greatest horror. If Tories think the highest religious or political Potentates can do *no wrong*, the Radicals go to the opposite extreme and maintain that they can do *no right*. They pretend to think that it is only people who are out of place and without power who can possess any real virtue. To be a Minister of State is to want a human heart. Thus Lord Castlereagh, if we were to believe the Radicals, had nothing in common with the rest of mankind. He was the personification of vice.

"A monster of such hideous mien
As to be hated need but to be seen."

Carlisle and Cobbett and Orator Hunt and Thelwall are the Gods of the Radicals. They have an instinctive hatred of every thing respectable and gentleman-like. A greasy head is with them synonymous with an honest heart, and nothing shocks them

so much as a certain Tory nobleman's ambrosial curls. A clean and well dressed wig is the severest charge which they can bring against him. They prefer Vauxhall and Wapping to Almack's and St. James's. They find something fresh, racy and natural in the smell of filthy aprons and the aspect of fat citizens, but they faint with disgust at Mr. Rowland's "oderiferous attempts to please." They have a fancy for unwashed faces and iron forks. This is why they are so inveterate against Mr. Croker, who has insisted on the propriety of an elegant table and a decent mode of discussing our meals. A Radical is essentially vulgar. He is an animal rarely admitted into well-carpeted drawing-rooms or glittering saloons. When by an odd chance he gains admittance into refined circles, he is known by his ungainly and clownish air, and his anti-social manners. He is uncomfortable and out of his element, and longs for an opportunity to vent his spleen within the range of kindred ears. The only way to conquer a Radical is to bribe him largely, and then you change his nature, or rather you allow him to display it in its original colours. Mr. Southey was a Radical until he got his Laureate wreath, his pension and his butt of malmsey. There is no instance on record of a Radical who kept on his mask after arriving at the summit of power. Those of the present Ministry who were once esteemed hot Radicals are now cool Whigs. They are very well satisfied with things as they are. They now say, "let well alone." It is only the disappointed place-hunters who keep up the cry of Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage.

The Radicals have a vast advantage over the Tories in the greater plausbility of their cause and the sympathy of the great mass of mankind. If a man tells the mob that they are entitled to share the wealth and power of their rulers, it does not require much logic to convince them that he is right. By artful appeals to the passions and prejudices of the populace, who are always ready to suppose their superiors in the wrong, a demagogue of

the lowest order may make the very stones of Rome to rise and mutiny. His object is not to suggest better plans of government, abstractedly so considered, but to effect any change by which he may benefit himself and open a way to his own ambition. When unable from adverse circumstances to gain an individual triumph, it is some satisfaction to him, to embarrass and foil his superiors. Very few Radicals really fancy that their wild theories of government could be practically beneficial to mankind; but having nothing to lose, they feel that it is as well to avail themselves, by whatever means, of a chance of gain. In the inevitable confusion and uproar of such a revolution as they contend for, they calculate upon acquiring that ascendancy which is denied them in a regular form of government. They think with Satan—that it is

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

THE SEPARATION.

I.

I ne'er shall know one moment's mirth
When thou art from my side,
I then shall view the cheerless earth
As one dark desert wide.
My soul may feel full many a care
Though none should sadden thee,
But save what thy dear breast may share
No joy can smile for me!

II.

Ah, sweet one, e'en when thou wert nigh
And fate had less of fear,
Thy radiant features in mine eye,
Thy light laugh in mine ear;
'Tis strange how fitfully a crowd
Of thoughts have crossed my brain,
That made thy fairy form, a cloud,
Thy voice, a sound of pain.

The dreary darkness of despair
Like storms in autumn's sky,
Then fell on every prospect fair,
I knew not whence or why;—
If thus the dire depression came
Before thy gleaming brow,
Alas! what agonies will tame
My wayward bosom now!

Amid the gay deceitful throng
   Whose smiles insult the sad,
I soon shall know each bitter wrong
   That makes the spirit mad;
For all that grief would fain reveal
   The selfish crowd disown,—
Oh! 'tis a fearful thing to feel
   In this cold world alone!

And yet this wild and weary state
   Henceforward must be mine;
To mix with those I scorn and hate,
   And prize no love but thine;
To dream that thou while distant far
   May'st smile on fashion's train,
Who'll watch thee as men watch the star
   That lights them o'er the main.

Though reason bids me trust thy truth,
   At times rebellious fears
Will tremble for thy guileless youth
   Besieged by sighs and tears;
And even though thy gentle heart
   Be faithful and the same,
It makes my jealous bosom smart
   When *others* breathe thy name.

VII.

The vows so fondly interchanged
  Each happy hour we met,
Thy soul indeed must be estranged
  Ere thou can'st all forget;—
But yet if we may meet again
  Nor mortal voice can tell,—
And, Oh! with what bewildering pain
  I bid thee now, *farewell!*

SONNET—THE PARTING*.

She sees her lover yet!—From yon high tower,
(Her bright locks floating on the morning wind
Like clouds beneath the sun,) with wildered mind
And heart that flutters like a breeze-stirred flower,
She takes her farewell look. Oh, till this hour
She knew not how she loved! Her soul was blind
To half her hero's worth, and now can find
Nor words nor signs to wreak her passion's power.
The last embrace is o'er. Where yet she stands
The lovers met and parted. Near her feet
His empty sheath was thrown—a token meet
Of valour's purpose stern. She waives her hands,
And still her strain'd eyes answering signals greet,
Where o'er the far hills wind the warrior bands.

* Written to illustrate an engraving in the *Bengal Annual*.

ON FALSE CRITICISM BY TRUE POETS.

That good poets are sometimes bad judges of excellence in their own art, may seem at first thought an untenable position, but it can easily be maintained by a reference to the history of literature. They *sing* with the tongues of angels, but they *speak* like mortals. When they quit their ethereal elevation and alight upon the common ground of criticism, they often stumble upon errors that are avoided by ordinary men. They are safer on their wings than on their feet. Notwithstanding their occasional inspiration, they are made of the same flesh and blood as other people, and are liable to the same prejudices and infirmities. Jealousy, envy, self-conceit, an exclusive cultivation of some particular department of his art, or a strong idiosyncracy of mind, or some early association, may as easily occasion an obliquity of judgment in the poet as in the mechanic. An author has an open or secret bias towards that branch of composition which he has most practised himself, and in which he is conscious that he best succeeds. This feeling too often influences his judgment upon the works of writers whose style and subject are essentially different from his own. To support his preferences, he invents or adopts certain theories or canons that would confine all literary merit within the narrow limits of his own sect or school. It is thus that the natural brotherhood of poets has been divided into innumerable parties which regard each other with avowed hostility and contempt. They are blinded to all excellence that is not in some degree akin to their own. When called upon for their judgment upon the poetry that is opposite to their favorite

style, they are by no means to be trusted*. It is only when the production to be criticised is congenial to their own peculiar taste that they are ready to observe and appreciate the minutest beauties.

> "Fondly they think they honour merit then,
> When they but praise themselves in other men."

It is this spirit of exclusiveness that is the besetting sin of poet-critics, as it is indeed of all men in their own particular arts. In this respect the poets are not worse than others. I am not now waging a war against those inspired benefactors of mankind. I should be ashamed indeed to be guilty of any thing so contrary to my nature. I merely wish to show that we must not too confidently adopt a poet's criticism upon poetry, though the world in general are apt to regard it as an authority that is no more to be disputed than a Papal Bull.

In support of the foregoing remarks, I shall proceed to notice some of the most glaring mistakes of poetical critics;—of the similar errors and absurdities of distinguished prose-writers, I shall say nothing upon this occasion. It would lead me into too wide a field.

One of the most celebrated of the poet-critics of modern times was Doctor Samuel Johnson, who displayed extraordinary sagacity and acuteness in analysing the merits of the kind of poetry that was most allied to his own, but who could never pass beyond that limit, with any degree of safety or success. He could dis-

* The following passage respecting Darwin in one of Anna Seward's letters is very characteristic of the jealousy of poets. "Since he commenced poet professed, Darwin is become notoriously guilty of the narrow-souled jealousy. Till then he was a warm admirer and generous encomiast of poetic effluence, in whatever form it might appear—now he dislikes odes—now he cannot endure sonnets—now he will not read blank-verse—all this because the "Botanic Garden" is in the couplet measure;—and because *it* is every where picture and nothing but picture, sentiment and passion are, according to his decision, out of the province of the Muses, and are 'best expressed in prose.'"

sect with the most severe precision the unmeaning nonsense and cold extravagances of the writers whom he has so oddly styled the "metaphysical poets," though he could ill appreciate their occasional flashes of genuine inspiration; and no critic has written more sensibly upon the character of Pope and Dryden. But Milton, and Gray, and Collins were out of his jurisdiction. They made an appeal to his taste and imagination that he could not answer. He had no eye for their richly colored visions, and no ear for their divinest music. He was proof against the "enchanting ravishment" that "would take the prisoned soul" of a more sensitive critic and "lap it in Elysium." Speaking entirely from his own feelings, he closes his review of *Paradise Lost* with the gothic assertion that its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. Of the *Lycidas*, which is so full of rich and varied melodies, he was of opinion that the diction was harsh and the numbers unpleasing. He once told Anna Seward that "he would hang a dog that read that poem twice." "What then," said Anna, "must become of me, who can say it by heart, and who often repeat it to myself with a delight which grows by what it feeds on?" "*Die*," said Boswell's Bear, "*in a surfeit of bad taste**." This is surely, not only what the lady calls it, "awful impoliteness," but a melancholy proof of Johnson's utter insensibility to some of the most exquisite charms of verse. He who could praise so highly the regular notes of Pope, had no ear for the varied movements of the majestic Milton. Of Milton's Sonnets (some of which are of such incomparable force and beauty) he has observed that "of the *best* it can only be said that they are not *bad*." Beattie tells us Dr. Johnson confessed to him that he never read Milton through till he was obliged to do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary; and that he spoke

* Dr. Joseph Warton has remarked, that "he who wishes to know, whether he has a true taste for poetry or not, should consider, whether he is highly delighted or not with the perusal of Milton's 'Lycidas.'"

"very peevishly" of the "Masque of Comus," in which are

Strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.

Of Collins, Johnson's unfavorable judgment is well known. With all his partiality and tenderness for the *man*, he had no feeling for the poet. He thought his poetry was not without some degree of merit, but confessed that he found it unattractive. "As men," said he, "are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure;"—and this is said of the finest ode-writer in the language—one of the most poetical of poets. The author of the *Ode to Evening*, a poem that floats into the reader's mind like a stream of celestial music, is pronounced harsh and prosaic in his diction. The high tone of Gray's lyric muse, and his exquisite versification, were lost upon the patron of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret and Yalden*. When some one spoke to him of Chatterton, he exclaimed indignantly, "Talk not to me of the powers of a vulgar uneducated stripling." What would he have said of Burns?

Dr. Johnson was one of the best of the commentators upon Shakespeare, and yet this is saying little in his favour; "Bad is the best;" Pope was one of the worst, which is saying not a little against him. He pronounced Shakespeare's style the style of a bad age, and observed, in reference to Sackville's Gordobuc, that the writers of a succeeding age might have improved by copying from this drama a propriety in the sentiments and a dignity in the style which are essential to tragedy. Shakespeare ought to have studied Sackville as his model!! Johnson's remarks and explanations, are generally sensible and clear, and his preface to

* The Poets in Dr. Johnson's collection were all selected by the booksellers, with the exception of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret and Yalden, who obtained admittance on the especial recommendation of the Doctor, as he himself tells us in his Life of Dr. Watts. Spenser and Shakespeare were excluded!

Shakespeare's plays is a noble piece of writing; but he never seems to enter thoroughly into the soul of that mighty poet. He could explain an obscure passage more readily than he could feel a fine one. He who thought a dirty street in London was a more agreeable prospect than the most romantic landscape in the world, and who was so insensible to the charms of music, as to wonder how any man of common sense could be so weak and foolish as to own its influence over his feelings, and could never for a moment give up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands and be "pleased he knew not why and cared not wherefore," was not likely to comment upon Shakespeare in a worthy spirit. A critic who would rightly estimate the miraculous productions of that glorious bard, should have an eye for all the loveliness of nature, and an ear for all melodious sounds. Not only his corporeal organs but all his intellectual faculties should be peculiarly sensitive and alert, or he can never clearly recognize the exquisitely perfect correspondence between the page of Shakespeare and "all the mighty world of eye and ear." Pope, also, was rather too much of a town wit and fashionable satirist to enjoy and appreciate the great poet of universal nature,

"Who was not for an age, but for all time."

His edition of the Prince of dramatic poets has fallen into deserved oblivion. He did not even understand or admire the more artificial, but yet manly and vigorous Ben Jonson. Spence tells us that Pope thought the greater part of that Dramatist's productions, poor "*trash.*"

But "Rare Ben" himself, though a good poet, was a bad critic. He said of Spenser, that "his stanzas pleased him not, nor his manner," and that "for some things he esteemed Donne the first poet in the world." Shakespeare, he thought, "wanted art, and sometimes sense"—and why? because he made a blunder in Geography!! In the *Winter's Tale* he made Bohemia a maritime

country;—little dreaming that an error of locality would deduct from the miraculous truth of his delineations of the human heart.

The melodious Waller saw nothing in Milton but an old blind school-master, who had written a dull poem, remarkable for nothing, but its length; and Milton himself preferred the glittering conceits of Cowley to the manly energy and truth of Dryden, whom he pronounced a good rhymist, but no poet. But Dryden, also, with all his real merit as a poet, was a critic whose decisions are never to be relied on; partly because he was prejudiced, partly because he was, comparatively speaking, deficient in imagination and sensibility, and partly because he was a most unblushing adulator. He thought "the matchless Orinda," Catherine Philips, was a great poetess. In this opinion, however, he does not stand alone. Cowley (who deemed Chaucer an old-fashioned wit not worth reviving) wrote an ode to her memory, in which the following lines occur:—

"But if Apollo should design
A woman Laureate to make,
Without dispute he would ORINDA take
Though Sappho and the famous Nine
Stood by and did repine.
* * * * * * *
The certain proofs of ORINDA's wit
In her own lasting characters are writ,
And they will long my praise of them survive,
Though long perhaps too that may live."

And Thomas Rowe thus speaks of her, in an "Epistle to Daphne."

"ORINDA came
To ages yet to come an ever glorious name!"

Dryden asked the permission of Milton to turn his *Paradise Lost* into rhyme! "Aye, young man," said the venerable old bard, "you may tag rhymes to my verses." On the subject of Milton's blank verse Dryden speaks out very plainly in his dedi-

cation to Juvenal, "Neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse, though I may excuse him by the example of Hannibal Caro, and other Italians, who have used it, for whatever the causes he alledges for the abolishing of rhyme, (which I have not now the leisure to examine) his own particular reason is plainly this, *that rhyme was not his talent; he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it.*" In this same dedication he tells Lord Halifax, one of the smallest of the minor poets, that he is "the restorer of poetry, the greatest genius, and the greatest judge." Well might Pope exclaim,

"Let but a Lord once own the happy lines
How the wit brightens, how the style refines!"

Halifax himself must have blushed at Dryden's praises. He could hardly have been so ludicrously ignorant of his own real character as a writer, as to receive the following eulogies as no more than a just tribute to his merit.—"There is more salt in your verses than I have seen in any of the moderns, or even of the ancients."—"Your lyric poems are the delight and wonder of this age, and will be the envy of the next."—"I may be allowed to tell your Lordship, who by an undisputed title are the King of Poets, what an extent of power you have," &c. "I must say, *with all the severity of truth,* that every line of yours is precious." "In tragedy and satire, I offer myself to maintain against some of our modern critics that this age and the last, particularly in England, have excelled the ancients in both those kinds; and I would instance Shakespeare in the former, and *your Lordship in the latter.*" This is really astounding nonsense, whether it be regarded as a piece of flattery so extravagant as to look like insult, or as an honest criticism written *with all the severity of truth!* Dryden, in his complimentary verses to Roscommon (another *noble* poet), does not hesitate to say that

Scarce his own Horace could such rules ordain,
Or his own Virgil sing a nobler strain.

He pronounced the versification of Spenser inferior to that of Waller. He had a profound respect for Rymer, whom he calls "a great critic." This *great* critic is now only known to a few readers of literary history by his audacious and absurd attack upon Shakespeare's plays, especially of Othello, which he elegantly styles "a bloody farce without salt or savour," and which can only fill the head with "vanity, confusion, *tintamarre*, and *jingle-jangle*." "There is nothing," he says, "in the noble Desdemona, that is not below any kitchen maid—no woman bred out of a pigstye could talk so meanly." "In the neighing of a horse," says this "*great* critic," "or in the growling of a mastiff, there is as much meaning, there is as lively expression, and may I say more humanity, than many times in the tragical flights of Shakespeare." That Dryden should have respected the judgment of such a critic as this is strange indeed. I think Rymer even exceeds Voltaire in abusive hostility to our Prince of Dramatists. The French poet-critic, as every Englishman remembers, has spoken of Shakespeare's "monstrous farces called tragedies," and wondered that a nation which had produced *Cato* (Addison's collection of cold and stilted dialogues in the dramatic form), should tolerate such plays as Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth and Othello! But if Voltaire has done British genius a gross injustice, he has suffered something in return. Gray declared that Voltaire (except as a writer of plays) was entirely without genius. Neither could he perceive any talent whatever in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Heloise*. He spoke in a similar strain of several British authors. He said that David Hume had continued all his days an infant, but had, unhappily, been taught to read and write. He saw no merit in Thompson's exquisite Castle of Indolence; and he thought Collins deficient in imagery! "He (Collins) deserves," said he, "to live some years, but will not." It would seem that the time has long gone by, when

"The sacred name
Of poet and of prophet was the same."

Gray, in his verses to the artist who embellished an edition of his poems, very oddly inverts the merits of Pope and Dryden; by speaking of the *energy* of the first and the *melody* of the second.

To the list of bad critics I am compelled to add the name of Collins, for he has ventured to assert in his Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer, that Fletcher excelled Shakespeare in the illustration of female tenderness.

> *His* every strain the smiles and graces own,
> But stronger Shakespeare felt for *man* alone.

It would be a waste of words to expose this egregious error, though I believe Collins only echoes Dryden. Gifford in his edition of Massinger almost repeats them both. He contends that Fletcher is at least as *pathetic* as Shakespeare. The pathos of *Lear* does not seem to have touched the author of the "*Baviad and Mæviad,*" a coarse and savage satire in which helpless women are insulted, and "butterflies are broken on a wheel." But in Gifford's estimation, not only is Fletcher at least Shakespeare's equal in pathos, but Beaumont is as sublime, Ben Jonson as nervous, and Massinger superior in rhythmical modulation. The sole point of unrivalled excellence that he leaves to Shakespeare is his wit! and yet Gifford was for many years one of our leading critics! We ought not to be surprised that he pronounced Hazlitt a dull-headed blockhead, and that he could discover neither genius nor common sense in Keats and Shelley. According to Gifford, "*the predominating character of Mr. Shelley's poetry is its frequent and total want of meaning.*" "It is not too much to affirm," he says, (in speaking of the Prometheus, &c.) "that in the whole volume there is not one original image of nature, one simple expression of human feeling, or one new association of the appearances of the moral with those of the material world."

There is a strange coincidence of opinion between those two *great* critics, Rymer and Gifford. "Shakespeare's genius," says the former, "lay for comedy and humour. In tragedy he appears

quite out of his element; his *brains are turned*—he raves and rambles about without any coherence, any spark of reason, or any rule to control him, to set bounds to his phrensy."

Anna Seward, a poetess of some note in her time, and still spoken of with respect by Southey, ranked Darwin and Hayley amongst the greatest of our bards. Of the former she thus writes: "He *knew* that his verse would live to distant ages; but he also knew that it would survive by the slowly accumulating suffrages of kindred genius when contemporary jealousy had ceased to operate." How vainly did the poet lay this flattering unction to his soul, and how completely was Anna Seward mistaken in all her sympathetic anticipations of her friend's future fame! Of the feeble and half forgotten Hayley, she speaks with even greater warmth, and in a style of prophecy which the lapse of a very few years has rendered absolutely ludicrous. "Hayley is indeed a true poet. He has the *fire* and *energy* of Dryden without his absurdity, (! !) and he has the wit and ease of Prior.(!) His beautiful Epistles on Painting—far even above these, his Essay on Epic Poetry, together with the fine Ode to Howard, will be considered as amongst the first Delphic ornaments of the 18th century." But even Cowper thought highly of Hayley and Darwin;—and Miss Seward was not a worse critic than the "true poet," whose productions are "amongst the first Delphic ornaments of the eighteenth century." In one of Hayley's letters to her, in alluding to Burns, he compares him to some obscure and humble versifier who had gained her patronage. "I admire the Scottish Peasant," says he, "but *I do not think him superior to your poetical carpenter*" ! !

Burns himself had a most extravagant opinion of Fergusson as a poet, whom he preferred to Allan Ramsay. Thomas Warton, though a great admirer of Milton's genius, thought nature had not blessed the divine old bard with an ear for verse. Akenside, who, observes Johnson, upon a poetical question, has a right to

be heard, said that "he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece;* for if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence." The prophecy of some wit in allusion to this poem that Dyer would be buried *in his own wool,* would have been fulfilled almost to the letter, if it were not for his "*Grongar Hill,*" on which he still breathes the vital air. Scott of Amwell, the Quaker poet, made a desperate attempt to rescue the "*Fleece*" from oblivion, and vainly endeavoured to persuade the public that it is much superior to the *Grongar Hill.*

Addison, who has been so much praised for his critique on Milton, was after all but another example of the fallibility of poetical critics. In his versified "Account of the *greatest* English Poets," he omits all allusion to Shakespeare, but praises Roscommon as "the best of critics and of Poets too!" After having taken due notice of numerous "great" poets, he recollects that "justice demands one labour more."

"The noble Montague remains unnamed."

That *Shakespeare* was unnamed was of little consequence! But though the critic and poet was, as he elegantly expresses himself,

"Tired with rhyming, and would fain give o'er,"

he would have deemed himself highly blame-worthy had he omitted Montague! His list of great poets would have been deplorably incomplete! Though he is so enraptured with Montague, he says little in favor of Chaucer or Spenser. Of the former he observes,

"In vain he jests in his unpolished strain;"

and of the latter he tells us, that though his tales "amused a barbarous age," (the age of Shakespeare, Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Beaumont, and Fletcher, &c. &c.!)

"An age as yet *uncultivate and rude,*"

That he is no longer to be tolerated ;—

> But now the mystic tale that charmed of yore
> Can charm an *understanding age* no more.

It is difficult to say whether the poetry or the criticism of this account be the most contemptible, and some readers may be disposed to exclude Addison altogether from the list of *poet*-critics ; but whatever was the character of his verse, it is certain that there was a truly poetical spirit in some of his Virgilian prose. His Vision of Mirza is conceived with the fancy of a poet, and conducted with consummate taste and judgment. How exquisitely fresh and oriental is the opening scene on the high hill of Bagdat, where we are introduced to the celestial visitant who plays on a musical instrument the sound of which was "exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious." And how truly poetical is the unexpected close, in which the dream of Mirza is suddenly yet softly broken, and he awakes to a beautiful reality :—

"At length, said I, shew me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on either side of the rock of adamant. The Genius making me no answer, I turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating: but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep and camels, grazing upon the sides of it."

Here is the imagery and the music of a true poet. It is a pity that Addison ever wrote in verse.

I begin to grow weary of my somewhat ungrateful task, but I must hurry on with a few further illustrations, entirely the fruits of casual reading. Many who peruse this essay may have met with examples still more striking than those which my own imperfect memory can supply ; but I feel bound to support my views with all the facts that are immediately within my reach. I remember meeting (some sixteen or twenty years ago), with a brief letter on a similar subject in one of our home-periodicals, I

forget which. If my recollections are accurate, the writer thought as I do, that poets are sometimes indifferent critics, but he gave very few examples, and the editor expressed his dissent from his correspondent's doctrine.

There is a poem of Beattie's, written upon "the report of a monument to be erected in Westminster Abbey to the memory of Churchill," that is not to be found in the common editions, from which it is very properly omitted. It contains some wretched criticism, and what is a great deal worse, it betrays a spirit of malignity that is perfectly disgusting. In this precious production he tries to persuade the world that the muse of the vigorous and animated Churchill, was "*drivelling and dull;*" that he wrote nothing but "coarse doggrel," and that in fact he was,

"By nature unmspired, untaught by art."

It is true that Churchill wasted his powers on local and temporary subjects, and that his poetry is now in consequence but little read; but there has been no change in the opinion of the public respecting the character of his genius. With all his faults he was a powerful and manly satirist. It seems difficult to believe that the grossest prejudice could fail to recognize the vast power of his satire, in which every word is a deadly blow. To all who have read in the *Rosciad*, the character of Mr. Fitzpatrick (the hero of Garrick's Fribbleriad), Beattie's contempt for Churchill's genius must seem the severest argument against his own. In the same poem in which Beattie thus betrays his bad judgment or his want of common candour as a critic with respect to Churchill, he shows too that he could not even commend his favorite poets with any discrimination. His praise almost looks like irony;

"Praise undeserved is censure in disguise."

He speaks of "Gray's *unlabored art*," (a poet who with great genius was the *most laborious artist* in English literature;) and of Pope's "energy divine," an expression by which Pope himself had so much more happily characterized his poetical father Dryden.

Few poets have exhibited a greater delicacy of taste in his own writings than Oliver Goldsmith, and yet he was but a very ordinary person when seated in the critic's chair, if we may judge from his brief comments in his collection of the "Beauties of English Poetry." He had the imprudence and audacity to insert amongst these selections, intended chiefly for the use of schools, two of the most flagrantly indecent of Prior's Tales, which effectually ruined it as a pecuniary speculation, and perhaps somewhat injured the moral character of the compiler. As a specimen of Goldsmith's style of criticism in his "Beauties of English Poetry," a work very rarely met with, I will quote a few of his notices *entire*. It is just the kind of criticism that one might expect from a school girl; it is vague and commonplace, and full of verbal repetitions.

Philips' Epistle to the Earl of Dorset.

"The opening of this poem is *incomparably fine*, the latter part is tedious and trifling."

Baucis and Philemon.

"This poem is *very fine*; and though *the same strain as the preceding* (Han's Carvel), *is yet superior*."

On the Use of Riches.

"This poem, as Mr. Pope tells us himself, cost much attention and labour; and from the *easiness* that appears in it one would be apt to think as much."

An Epistle to a Lady.

"This little poem by Mr. Nugent is very pleasing. The *easiness* of the poetry and the *justness of the thoughts* constitute its principal beauty."

A Pastoral ballad.

"The ballads of Mr. Shenstone are chiefly commended for the natural *simplicity of the thoughts* and the harmony of the versification. However they are not excellent in either."

Phœbe, a Pastoral.

"This by Dr. Byron *(m ?)* is a *better effort than the preceding.*"

These are not partial or broken extracts—they are entire notices. That Goldsmith should deny to Shenstone's ballads the merit of "harmony" is strange enough, but it is still stranger that esteeming them good neither in the versification nor the thoughts, he should have inserted one of them amongst his "*Beauties* of British Poetry." Goldsmith's verbal repetitions remind me of the criticism in a late publication which is got up with great external elegance—I allude to the "*Book of Gems.*" Every poet is there represented as remarkable for some excellence or defect "TO A DEGREE." Of Coleridge it is said "his judgment and taste were sound *to a degree*"—of Lamb that he was "amiable *to a degree,*"—of Wilson, that his countenance is "gentle *to a degree,*"—and of Hogg, that he "was kind and liberal *to a degree.*"

Amongst the poets of the nineteenth century, we have a melancholy display of bad critics upon productions in their own art. Byron called Spenser "a dull fellow," and said, "he could see nothing in him*." He considered that Chaucer was "*contemptible,*" and owed his celebrity merely to his antiquity, and that he was inferior to Pierce Plowman and Thomas of Ercildoune. He placed Rogers at the head of all his contemporaries, and looked (or pretended to look) with supreme scorn upon Southey and Wordsworth. He thus spoke of the most ambitious of the latter's undertakings:—

* If Byron ever read Gabriel Harvey's letter to Spenser, in which he discourages him from proceeding with the *Fairy Queen*, he must have been delighted with such congeniality of taste. Harvey was a man of great learning and elegant accomplishments, and wrote verses which were well thought of by Spenser himself and other good judges of poetical merit. Spenser sent Harvey a specimen of the *Fairy Queen* for his opinion, and his "most special friend" returned it with a prayer that "*God or some good angel would put him in a better mind.*" This condemnation of Spenser's noblest work is accompanied with high praises of some of his inferior productions.

"A clumsy, frowzy poem called *the Excursion*,
Writ in a manner that is my aversion."

He said Cowper was "no poet," and intimated that Pope was at least equal if not superior to Shakespeare, for whom he had no very passionate admiration. He thought the author of the "Essay on Man" was the greatest of poets, because the science of morals is the greatest of all subjects;—though he contradicted himself by an equally foolish position, that a poet ranks by his execution alone, and not by the nature of his subject or undertaking; so that the author of a good epigram must be equal in rank to the author of a good Epic, which Dryden calls the greatest work of which the mind of man is capable. Young's "Revenge" was Byron's favorite play, though he had read "Othello!"

Wordsworth calls Dryden's celebrated music-ode, "a drunken song*," and professes to entertain a profound contempt for some of the finest poetry of Burns. The celebrated Dr. Wolcott (Peter Pindar) used to speak in the same style of Dryden's ode. "How woefully," he would often exclaim, "have mankind been mistaken in their admiration of this *paltry production!*" In a note to the first stanza of "Frogmore Fete" he thus alludes to it. "In spite of all the praises bestowed on "Alexander's Feast, I dare pronounce it a downright drunken Bartholomew-fair scene: the poetry too but little superior to the subject," Perhaps Peter Pindar himself has too much of the coarseness and vulgarity which he here attributes to Dryden to deserve the name of a poet; but he was a truly popular writer in his day, and the booksellers granted him an annuity for the copy-right of his works. He, however,

* Mason objected "that this ode was too much of the Ballad species—too remote from the lyric genius." The line of pathetic iteration,

Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,

he said was devoid of all meaning, and tended to excite something bordering on the ludicrous rather than to add to the pathetic impression already excited. He thought Polwhele's translations from Theocritus for smoothness and harmony of versification considerably exceeded the original.

very nearly survived his reputation, though he anticipated immortality as an author, and prided himself on the reflection that his verses had been translated into six different languages. The famous Polish general, Kosciusko, was one of his admirers, and amused himself with his poems in his prison at St. Petersburgh. When the Duke of Kent was in America he saw a pretty little girl in a cottage, and on asking her what books she read, she replied, "the Bible and Peter Pindar." A popularity, however extensive, seems no certain indication of lasting fame. Mrs. Hemans in one of her letters (published in Chorley's "Memorials" of her) records the following very remarkable conversation between herself and the great poet of the Lakes. "We were sitting on a bank" (she writes) "overlooking Rydal Lake, and speaking of Burns. I said, 'Mr. Wordsworth, do you not think his war ode '*Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled,*' has been a good deal overrated? especially by Mr. Carlyle, who calls it the noblest lyric in the language?' 'I am delighted to hear you ask the question;' was his reply, 'overrated?—trash!—stuff!—miserable inanity! without a thought—without an image!' &c. &c. Then he recited the piece in a tone of unutterable scorn; and concluded with a *Da Capo* of 'wretched stuff!—'"

Wordsworth and Coleridge see no beauty in Gray's Elegy, though the latter had the most extravagantly favourable opinion of the sentimental poetry of Bowles, and praises it for its "*manliest* melancholy." He could write too a laudatory address to the Muse of Amos Cottle! Keats styled all the poets of the Frenchified English school, "a school of dolts."

> ————"Ye taught a school
> Of dolts, that smooth, inlay and clip and fit
> Till like the certain wands of Jacob's wit
> Their verses tallied. *Easy was the task.*"

Perhaps Keats would not have found the composition of another "Rape of the Lock," quite so *easy a task* as he imagined. There

is even in the "Essay on Man" and the "Prologue to *Cato*," something more than

> "A puling infant's force
> That swayed about upon a rocking-horse,
> And thought it Pegasus."

Sir Walter Scott, though he exhibited a noble impartiality and a rare self-insight when speaking of his own poems, was not a first rate judge of the poetry of other men. "He often said to me," (says his friend Ballantyne,) "that neither his own nor any modern popular style of composition, was that from which he derived most pleasure. I asked him what it was; he answered,"— (what does the reader suppose? Shakespeare's, Spenser's, Milton's, Dryden's, Pope's, Burns'? Oh! no—) "*Dr. Johnson's (!)* and that he had more pleasure in reading '*London*' and '*The Vanity of Human Wishes*' than *any other poetical composition he could mention.*" Scott, however, is the only poet I have read of, who judged fairly and yet unfavourably of his own poetical compositions. He always said that they could never live: and were not to be compared with the works of many of his contemporaries. In the meridian of his own poetical popularity he felt that those comparatively neglected writers, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, were far greater poets, and more deeply touched with the holy fire of inspiration. Nor did Scott ever prefer his worst pieces to his best. In this respect he exhibited a far clearer judgment than many other celebrated authors. Petrarch doted on his *Africa*, Milton on his *Paradise Regained*, Prior on his *Solomon*, and Byron on his *Hints from Horace*.

I have now, I think, sufficiently established my position that good poets are not *always* good critics, and that we ought not to trust too implicitly to their authority on a question of poetical criticism. But I should not wish it to be supposed either that I am hostile to the poets, to whom we are all so much indebted, or that I consider them worse judges of poetry than other men. I

only contend that their judgment is *not infallible;* but I still think they are *greatly better critics upon poetry than the generality of mankind.* If we could suppose a poet with no exclusiveness of taste, (and there may be many such,) we might be pretty sure that his superior sensibility to poetic excellence, would make him a much better critic than other men; and even those poets who are wedded to some particular branch or style of art, are generally the best judges of the relative merit of productions in their own favourite department. It is a rare thing indeed to meet with a true critic upon either of the fine arts, but though such a judge is not often to be found, he is more frequently to be found amongst the artists themselves than elsewhere. It is on this account that a poet so fondly treasures up to his dying day a single word of praise from the lips of some great master in his profession. "I really believe," exclaims Sir Egerton Brydges, "that three or four cherished lines in the hand of Wordsworth upon one of my sonnets, saved me from a total mental wreck; and the recovery was completed by the letters of Southey and Lockhart, which have been impressed so deeply on my heart, that, while it beats, they will never be effaced or faded."

DEATH AND THE WARRIOR.



[The following poem was written as an illustration of an engraving by R. Dagley, Esq., in the second edition of a work entitled "*Death's Doings*." Death is represented as in the act of placing a helmet on the head of a young warrior, who is standing at the door of a tent, while a female is winding a scarf round his arm. A horse caparisoned, military emblems, &c. are seen in the background.]

I.

The warrior's soul is kindling now
With wildly blending fires;
He fondly breathes each raptured vow
That faithful love inspires;
But not those soothing words alone
Arrest the maiden's ear,
For young ambition's loftier tone
Awakes the throb of fear!

II.

They hear the war-notes on the gale,
Before the tent they stand;
His form is clad in glittering mail,
The sword is in his hand;
Her scarf around his arm is twined,
Love's silken chain and spell,—
Ah! would that mortal skill could bind
The links of life as well!

III.

The battle-steed is waiting nigh,
  Nor brooks his lord's delay,
And eager troops are trampling by,
  And wave their banners gay.
Nor boding dream, nor bitter care,
  In that proud host is found,
While echoing through the startled air
  The cheering trumpets sound!

IV.

The maid with mingled pride and grief,
  Faint hopes and trembling fears,
Still gazes on the gallant chief
  Through dim impassioned tears.
He sees but victory's laurel wreath,
  And love's unfading flame,
Nor thinks how soon the form of Death
  May cross the path of fame!

V.

"A last farewell—a last embrace—
  And now for Glory's plain!"
Those parting accents left a trace
  Of frenzy on her brain;
And when the warrior's helm was brought
  To crown his forehead fair,
Alas! the shuddering maiden thought
  'Twas DEATH that placed it there!

SONNET.

Lady—when life is desolate and drear,
How sweet to weep, if charms like thine beguile
Wild passion's strife and wake the soothing tear!
Benign consoler! at thy pensive smile
Calm piety and trusting faith prevail
O'er sorrow's madness; Hope's rekindled beam
The dull gloom cheers, and Peace, so wont to fail,
Steals o'er the troubled spirit like a dream!
A cloud is on my heart,—yet, fondly now
I gaze on thee, nor breathe one murmuring sigh;—
There is a grace upon thy placid brow,
A soul of beauty in thine azure eye,
Blent with a holy meekness in thine air,
That speak not of the earth, and shame the fiend, Despair!

SONNET—TO POESY.

Fair Ruler of the visionary hour!
Sweet idol of the passionate and wild!
Enchantress of the soul! Lo! Sorrow's child
Still haunts thy shrine, and invocates thy power!
Alas! when Fortune and the false world lower,
Shall thy sad votary supplicate in vain?
Wilt thou, too, scorn affliction's withered bower,
Nor lend thine ear to misery and pain?
Spirit unkind! And yet thy charms controul
My fervent aspirations—worthless still,—
And fitful visions, all undreamt at will,
With ungrasped glory mock my cheated soul!
Like beauteous forms of hope, that glimmer nigh,
But from Despair's approach for ever fly!

BROWNE'S BRITTANIA'S PASTORALS.

WITH the exception of the plays of Shakespeare, there is very little popularly known of the poetry of the time of Elizabeth and James. Many persons who affect a love of reading are apt to talk familiarly enough of the names of Marlowe, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Shirley, Ford, Spenser, Warner, Drayton, and Daniel, while of the works of these authors they are perhaps as ignorant as of the literature in the moon. To those who are stirred with a true and deep affection for genuine poetry, the long buried and but lately resuscitated treasures of the past, are a source of the most exquisite enjoyment. It has been remarked, that if a man would know the magnitude of human genius, he should read the plays of Shakespeare; but if he would know the littleness of human learning, he should study his commentators. Much cannot be said of the taste and sensibility evinced by such men as Warburton, Steevens, Malone and others in their criticisms upon our great dramatic bard; but they have undoubtedly been of some service to literature, by indirectly recalling the public attention to his contemporaries, whose pages they have studied to assist them in explaining the numerous archaisms and obscure allusions of their author's text. Cold and pedantic as they seem, they were amongst our earliest pioneers in clearing the way to the glorious past. If left to themselves, it must be confessed that little would have been gained by their industry and zeal; because their learning was without refinement, and their labours undirected by true taste. By reviving the claims of Shakespeare, and by referring so frequently to the

names of his contemporaries, they excited an eager and wholesome curiosity amongst better judges than themselves; and this, of course, led to the discovery that the wits of Queen Anne's time, with all their sprightliness and polish, were by no means in the highest rank of British genius. We had become so thoroughly *Frenchified* in our literature, that one of the best writers of the day had incurred the dishonour of Voltaire's admiration, who wondered how a nation that had produced the tragedy of *Cato*, could endure the dramas of that "drunken savage," William Shakespeare. We had been intellectually enslaved by a foreign nation, ever since the return of the second Charles.

> We conquered France, but felt our captive's charms,
> Her arts victorious triumphed o'er our arms.

But as soon as the English people were recalled to a sense of the merits of their own elder writers, they felt the superiority of truth and nature over that flippant wit, and smartness of manner, which form the characteristics of the majority of the popular writers who for so long a period completely hood-winked the public judgment. Bishop Percy, with his collection of old English Ballads, gave a strong additional impulse to the re-action; and Warton, with his History of Poetry, and Cowper, with his fine idiomatic diction and manly simplicity of thought and feeling, almost consummated the revolution. Campbell and Crabbe and Rogers still lingered on the confines of the French School; but Wordsworth and his disciples have sometimes carried the revival of the ancient English simplicity to an objectionable extreme. Those readers, who are ignorant of our old English writers, are apt to look upon the free versification of Leigh Hunt and Barry Cornwall, and the bare simplicity of some of Wordsworth's lyrical ballads, as a modern novelty; whereas they are nothing more than a return to our ancient manners, to which, however, they have added an incongruous mixture of the artifices and

refinements of the present period. Their poetry is, after all, of a composite order, a kind of modern antique.

Amongst the least known but not the least pleasing of our elder poets is William Browne, the author of *Brittania's Pastorals*, a writer whom Milton appears to have studied with so much delight that he paid him the compliment of imitation. A poem by Browne, on the story of Circe and Ulysses, called the *Inner Temple Masque*, is thought by Warton to have suggested to Milton some hints for his Masque of Comus. The following song, which Circe sings as a charm to drive away sleep from Ulysses, is quoted from Browne by Warton, who observes that it reminds him of some favorite touches in Milton's poem :—

THE CHARME.

Sonne of Erebus and Nighte ?
Hye away, and aime thy flighte,
Where consorte none other fowle
Than the batte and sullen owle :
Where, upon the lymber gras,
Poppy and mandragoras*,
With like simples not a fewe,
Hange for ever droppes of dewe :
Where flowes Lethe, without coyle,
Softly like a stream of oyle.
Hye thee thither, gentle Sleepe !
With this Greeke no longer keepe.
Thrice I charge thee by my wand,
Thrice with moly from my hand
Doe I touch Ulysses' eyes,
And with th'iaspis. Then arise
Sagest Greeke.

Browne's *Brittania's Pastorals*, which he published in his twenty-third year, display not only great richness and originality

This line recals a passage in Shakespeare :—
Not poppy nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday.—*Othello.*

of fancy, but a turn for observation and reflection not a little remarkable in so young a man. Pope's Pastorals were published in his twenty-first year, though it is said they were written somewhat earlier. It would be an interesting task, to compare minutely the eclogues of these two writers, so essentially opposed in their cast of mind, and born at different periods, when such opposite styles of poetry were in fashion. There is an air of greater learning in those of Pope, and of more truth and originality in those of Browne. In the former there is not a single new image, but there are many ingenious imitations of the Greek and Roman Classics; in the latter there are abundance of fresh transcripts from nature, and very few echoes of other poets. Pope is artful and elegant; Browne is natural and free. If a critic were disposed to compliment them both, he might say that Pope was the British Virgil, and Browne the British Theocritus. The Pastorals of Pope are in point of versification the most polished of all his works. The ear of a young poet is maturer than his mind. Pope seems to have entertained a false notion, that a poet should study books more than nature; and he himself avows, that if his Pastorals have any merit, it is to be attributed "to some good old authors, whose works, as he had leisure to read, so he had not wanted care to imitate them." Well might Dr. Johnson tell us, that the poet in his Pastorals seemed more anxious to show his literature than his wit. That he should have sat down to describe rural scenes without once thinking of going beyond his book-shelves, is a strong illustration of the unhappy system of poetry then in vogue. It is not to be wondered at that he gave us no new pictures of nature, and that he jumbled together a chaotic mixture of Greek, Roman, and British persons, scenes and manners. Pope, in his own discourse on Pastorals, has told us that the fable, manners, thoughts and expressions should be "full of the greatest simplicity in nature;" and yet there are no compositions in the language more thoroughly arti-

ficial than his own. But it is easier to point out the right way than to follow it. It is curious enough that in his ironical paper in the *Guardian*, he taunts Philips with having introduced wolves in England, though he had once inserted in his own "Pastorals" the following line, which, on second and better thoughts, he had omitted :—

"And listening wolves grow milder as they hear."

Browne's Pastorals are open to almost as many objections as those of Pope, but the faults are of a very different kind. In the smoothness of his versification and in the elegance of his diction, Pope has infinitely surpassed his predecessor. His plan also is better conceived, and more judiciously conducted. There is no regularity or completeness in Browne, whose merit consists in the excellence of particular passages. The reader is often disgusted with his tedious minuteness, his occasional abruptness, his confusion, and his want of refinement. But his flowers of fancy are so fresh and vivid, and are strown about in such magnificent heaps and with such a lavish hand, that a genuine lover of poetry can overlook a great deal of less agreeable matter for the sake of such rare enjoyments. Browne is not a poet for the people. He is, like Spenser, a poet's poet. They who read him for his story will meet with certain disappointment. His fable is always singularly uninteresting. We turn to him not to enjoy his subject matter, but his illustrations. His ornaments are like jewels upon an ungainly personage, and lose nothing by an abstraction from the body, and a separate examination. On this account, I propose to select a few detached passages, and, without further preface, lay them before the reader.

After his great master, Spenser, Browne occasionally indulges in allegorical description. He has given us a portrait of RIOT almost worthy of the author of *The Fairy Queen*.

SOMETHING appear'd, which seem'd farre off a man,
In stature, habit, gate, proportion ;

But when the eyes their object's masters were,
And it for stricter censure came more neere,
By all his properties one well might ghesse,
Than of a man he sure had nothing lesse.
For verily since olde Deucalion's flood
Earth's slime did ne'er produce a viler brood.
Upon the various earth's embroidered gowne
There is a weed upon whose head growse downe;
Sow-thistle 'tis ycleep'd whose downy wreath,
If any one can blow off at a breath,
We deeme her for a maid: such was his haire,
Ready to shed at any stirring aire.
His eares were strucken deafe when he came nie,
To hear the widowe's or the orphan's crie.
His eyes encircled with a bloody chaine,
With poring in the bloud of bodies slaine.
His mouth exceeding wide, from whence did flie
Vollies of execrable blasphemie;
' Banning the Heavens, and he that rideth on them,
Dar'd vengeance to the teeth to fall upon him:
Like Scythian wolves, or men of wit bereaven,
Which howle and shoute against the lights of Heaven.
His hands, (if hands they were) like some dead corse,
With digging up his buried ancestors;
Making his father's tombe and sacred shrine
The trough wherein the hog-herd fed his swine:
And as that beast hath legs (which shepheards feare,
Ycleep'd a badger, which our lambs doth teare)
One long, the other short, that when he runnes
Upon the plaines, he halts; but when he wonnes
On craggy rocks or steepy hills, we see
None runnes more swift, nor easier, than he:
Such legs the monster had, one sinew shrunk,
That in the plaines he reel'd as being drunk;
And halted in the paths to virtue tending;
And therefore never durst be that way bending:
But when he came on carvèd monuments,
Spiring colosses, and high raised rents,
He pass'd them o'er, quick, as the easterne winde
Sweepes through a meadow; or a nimble hinde;
Or satyre on a lawne; or skipping roe;
Or well-wing'd shaft forth of a Parthian bowe.
His body made (still in consumptions rife)
A miserable prison for a life.

Riot he hight; whom some curs'd fiend did raise,
When like a chaos were the nights and dayes;
Got and brought up in the Cimmerian clime,
Where sunne nor moone, nor daies nor nights do time:
As who should say, they scorn'd to show their faces
To such a fiend, should seeke to spoil the graces.

The progress of *Riot* in the path of repentance is described in the following pasage. I solicit the particular attention of the reader to the elaborate yet happy similes. Browne in these embellishments is far more successful than in the actual groundwork of his poems.

As when a maide, taught from her mother's wing
To tune her voyce unto a silver string,
When she should run, she rests; rests, when should run,
And ends her lesson, having now begun:
Now misseth she her stop, then in her song,
And, doing of her best, she still is wrong:
Begins againe, and yet againe strikes false,
Then in a chafe forsakes her virginals;
And yet within an hour she tries a-new,
That with her daily paines (art's chiefest due)
She gaines that charming skill: and can no lesse
Tame the fierce walkers of the wilderness,
Than that Œagrian harpist, for whose lay
Tigers with hunger pined and left their prey.
So Riot, when he gan to climbe the hill
Here maketh haste, and there long standeth still;
Now getteth up a step, then falls againe:
Yet not despairing, all his nerves doth straine
To clamber up a-new, then slide his feet,
And downe he comes; but gives not over yet,
For (with the maide) he hopes, a time will be
When merit shall be lincked with industre.

Now as an angler melancholy standing,
Upon a greene bancke yeelding roome for landing,
A wrigling yealow worme thrust on his hooke,
Now in the midst he throwes, then in a nooke:
Here pulls his line, there throws it in againe,
Mending his crooke and baite, but all in vaine
He long stands viewing of the curlèd stream;
At last a hungry pike, or well growne breame,

Snatch at the worme, and hasting fast away
He, knowing it a fish of stubborne sway,
Puls up his rod, but soft; (as having skill)
Wherewith the hooke fast holds the fishe's gill.
Then all his line he freely yeeldeth him,
Whilst furiously all up and downe doth swimme
Th' insnared fish, here on the toppe doth scud,
There underneath the banckes, then in the mud;
And with his franticke fits so scares the shole,
That each one takes his hyde or starting hole:
By this the pike, cleane wearied, underneath
A willow lyes, and pants (if fishes breathe);
Wherewith the angler gently puls him to him.
And leaste his haste might happen to undoe him,
Layes downe his rod, then takes his line in hand,
And by degrees getting the fish to land,
Walkes to another poole: at length is winner
Of such a dish as serves him for his dinner:
So when the climber halfe the way had got,
Musing he stood, and busily gan plot.
How (since the mount did always steeper tend)
He might with steps secure his journey's end.
At last (as wand'ring boyes to gather nuts)
A hooked pole he from a hasell cuts;
Now throws it here, then there, to take some hold,
But bootlesse and in vaine, the rocky molde
Admits no cranny, where his hasell hooke
Might promise him a step, till in a nooke
Somewhat above his reach he hath espide
A little oake, and having often tride
To catch a bough with standing on his toe,
Or leaping up, yet not prevailing so;
He rolls a stone towards the little tree,
Then gets upon it, fastens warily
His pole unto a bough, and at his drawing
The early rising crow with clam'rous kawing,
Leaving the greene bough flyes about the rocke,
Whilst twentie twentie couples to him flocke:
And now within his reach the thinne leaves wave,
With one hand onely then he holds his stave,
And with the other grasping first the leaves,
A pretty bough he in his fist receives;
Then to his girdle making fast the hooke,
His other hand another bough hath tooke;

His first, a third, and that, another gives,
To bring him to the place where his roote lives.

Then, as a nimble squirrill from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filberd-food,
Sits partly on a bough his browne nuts cracking,
And from the shell the sweet white kernell taking,
Till (with their crookes and bags) a sort of boyes
(To share with him) come with so great a noyse,
That he is forc'd to leave a nut nigh broke,
And for his life leape to a neighbour oake;
Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes;
Whilst through the quagmires and red water plashes,
The boyes runne dabling thro' thicke and thin,
One tears his hose, another breakes his shin;
This, torne and tatter'd hath with much adoe
Got by the bryers; and that hath lost his shooe:
This drops his band; that headlong fals for haste;
Another cryes behinde for being last: •
With stickes and stones, and many a sounding hollow,
The little foole, with no small sport, they follow,
Whilst he, from tree to tree, from spray to spray,
Gets to the wood, and hides him in his dray:
Such shift made RIOT, ere he could get up,
And so from bough to bough he wonne the toppe,
Though hind'rances from ever comming there
Were often thrust upon him by Despaire.

I have seen the line marked in italics noticed with high praise and very justly, but forget by whom. It is a particularly characteristic little touch. The following passage opens with a fresh and vivid description of a morning in the country.

THE Muse's friend (gray-eyde Aurora) yet
Held all the meadows in a cooling sweat,
The milk-white gossamores not upwards snow'd,
Nor was the sharp and useful steering goad
Laid on the strong-neckt oxe; no gentle bud
The sun had dryde; the cattle chew'd the cud
Low leveld on the grasse; no flye's quicke sting
Inforc'd the stonehorse in a furious ring
To teare the passive earth, nor lash his taile
About his buttockes broad; the slimy snayle
Might on the wainscot (by his many mazes
Winding meanders and self-knitting traces)

Be follow'd, where he stucke, his glittering slime
Not yet wiped off. It was so earely time
The careful smith had in his sooty forge
Kindled no coale : nor did his hammers urge
His neighbour's patience : owles abroad did flye,
And day as then might plead his infancy.
Yet faire Albion all the westerne swaines
Were long since up, attending on the plaines
When Nereus' daughter with her mirthfull boast
Should summon them, on their declining coast.

But since her stay was long : for feare the Sunne
Should find them idle, some of them begunne
To leape and wrestle, others threw the barre,
Some from the company removèd are
To meditate the songs they meant to play,
Or make a new round for next holiday ;
Some tales of love their love-sicke fellowes told :
Others were seeking stakes to pitch their fold.
This, all alone was mending of his pipe ;
That, for his lasse sought fruits most sweet, most ripe.
Here, (from the rest) a lovely shepheard's boy
Sits piping on a hill, as if his joy
Would still endure, or else that age's frost
Should never make him thinke what he had lost.
Yonder a sheppheardesse knits by the springs,
Her hands still keeping time to what she sings ;
Or seeming, by her song, those fairest hands
Were comforted working. Neere the sands
Of some sweet river sits a musing lad,
That moanes the losse of what he sometime had,
His love by death bereft : when fast by him
An aged swaine takes place, as neere the brim
Of's grave as of the river ; showing how
That as those floods, which passe along right now,
Are follow'd still by others from their spring,
And in the sea have all their burying ;
Right so our times are knowne, our ages found,
(Nothing is permanent within this round :)
One age is now, another that succeedes,
Extirping all things which the former breedes :
Another follows that, doth new times raise,
New yeers, new months, new weeks, new hours, new days,
Mankinde thus go like rivers from their spring,
And in the earth have all their burying.

Thus sate the olde man counselling the young;
Whilst, underneath a tree which over-hung
The silver streame, (as some delight it tooke
To trim his thick boughes in the chrystall brooke)
Were set a jocund crew of youthfull swaines
Wooing their sweetings with dilicious straynes.

The exquisite picture of the Shepherd boy, piping as if he would never be old, is borrowed from the Arcadia of Sir Philip Sidney, a beautiful prose pastoral which Browne must have read with enthusiasm. He is by no means a frequent plagiarist, for he had too much wealth in his own hand to be tempted by the wealth of others; but there are two or three other passages for which he is evidently indebted, perhaps quite unconsciously, to his contemporaries. In the following lines we are reminded of Shakespeare's well-known description (in *As You Like It*) of the boy creeping like a snail unwillingly to school.

As children on a play-day leave the schooles,
And gladly run unto the swimming pooles
Or in the thickets, all with nettles stung,
Rush to despoil some sweet thrush of her young;
Or with their hats (for fish) lade in a brooke
Withouten paine: but when the morne doth looke
Out of the eastern gates, *a snayle would faster*
Glide to the schooles than they unto their master;
So when, &c. &c.

But if Browne has occasionally caught a flash of light from the lamps of other men, he has the honour to be much more sinned against than sinning. I have already alluded to the hints he afforded to the great Milton, and will now lay before the reader a beautiful passage that evidently suggested to Dryden his nobly modulated lines at the commencement of his *Theodore and Honoria*, which I have cited, on a former occasion and in another place, as a fine specimen of imitative harmony. It may be as well to refresh the reader's memory with Dryden's verses.

While listening to the murmuring leaves he stood
More than a mile immersed within the wood;

At once the wind was laid ; the whispering sound
Was dumb ; a rising earthquake rocked the ground ;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread,
A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
And his ears tingled and his colour fled.—*Dryden.*

These lines, admirable as they are, were suggested by the following, which exhibit the same fine variety of pause. Their sound must have haunted the ear of Dryden.

Each river, every rill
Sent up their vapours to attend her will.
These pitchy curtains drew 'twixt earth and heaven,
And as night's chariot through the ayre was driven,
Clamour grew dumb ; unheard was shepherd's song,
And silence girt the woods ; no warbling tongue
Talked to the echo ; satyrs broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance.
Only the curlèd streames soft chidings kept ;
And little gales that from the green leafe swept
Dry summer's dust, in fearful whispering stirred
As loth to waken any singing bird.—*Browne.*

Mr. Campbell, in his "Specimens of the British Poets," has given a few passages from Browne. But while Campbell acknowledges that the poetry is not without beauty, he seems to sneer at those who have thought the fourth eclogue of Browne's "*Shepherd's Pipe*" the precursor of Milton's Lycidas. "A single simile" (he observes) "about a rose constitutes all the resemblance!" This is not the case. The simile of the rose is as follows :—

[*From Browne.*]

Looke as the sweet rose fairely buddeth forth
Bewrayes her beauties to the enamoured morn,
Until some keene blast from the envious north
Killes the sweet bud that was but newly borne,
Or else her rarest smells delighting
Make her, herself betray,
Some white and curious hand inviting
To plucke her thence away.

So stands my mournfull case,
For had he been lesse good
He yet (all uncorrupt) had kept the stocke
Whereon he fairly stood.

[*From Milton.*]

As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows,
Such Lycidas thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Here is not an absolute plagiarism, but there is evidently a borrowed suggestion—a kind of debt which a great poet is often found to owe even to his inferiors. But it is not this single passage alone which shows, that Milton's perusal of Browne's verses had left an impression on his ear and mind that influenced him in the composition of his Lycidas. Browne, in the introduction to his eclogue, explains that "the author bewails the death of one, whom he shadoweth forth under the name of Philarete;" and Milton in his pastoral monody also "bewails a friend" under a poetical name. The general plan, the occasion, the sentiments and the illustrations of both poems, are very similar—a similarity that is too close to be an accidental coincidence. That the passage about the rose is not the only one that seems to have given a hint to Milton, the following lines will convince any reader in the habit of tracing out poetical beauties to their first source, which is often too obscure and dim to strike a careless eye.

Behold our flowery beds :
Their beauties fade, *and violets*
For sorrow hang their heads.

Browne.

The glowing *violet*,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine.
With cowslips wan that *hang* the pensive *head*,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.

Milton.

In the place of the words *sad embroidery* in the last line, Milton originally wrote (as is known from the various readings in his manuscript copy) *sorrow's livery;* which was perhaps a slight shade nearer to the imagery of Browne.

Browne was born in Devonshire, and has made his native county—the garden of England—the scene of his Pastorals. I honor him for his boldness, his good sense, and his good taste, in breaking through the silly custom of carrying the British Muse to foreign regions, in search of beauties that are no where more easily found than in our own delightful land.

SONNET.

ON THE DEATH OF —

NEVER, oh! never, this sin-tainted earth,
The realm of care, hath holier pilgrim trod!
The priest of Nature, Poetry, and God!
His words were bodied radiance, and his worth
An angel's dower. There seemed nor gloom nor dearth
When he but smiled. His thoughts were lovelier far
Than flower or gem, or sun or moon or star,
Or river-waves that dance in summer mirth.
Of transitory hopes the base control
He proudly spurned for heaven's eternal day.
A death-spark touched his tenement of clay,
And forth upsprang towards its destined goal
The flame divine. A purer spirit never
Hath joined the choir that hymn their God for ever!

LOVE-VERSES.

I.

When thou wert nigh the world was bright,
And life a lovely dream;
I basked beneath the warm sun's light,
Or hailed the lunar beam;—
In every mood, by night or day,
The time too swiftly passed away.

II.

But all is changed—for thou art gone!
Life's visions prove untrue;
The sun assumes a fiery tone,
The moon a sickly hue;
And night and day alike appear
Unlovely, wearisome, and drear.

III.

I mixed with thee in fashion's crowd
Nor felt a single care,
I fled with thee from revels loud
Home's softer spells to share,
And still I bore a blissful lot
In festal hall or quiet cot.

IV.

But oh! now *thou* art from my side
I shun the mirthful throng,
And sadness and unsocial pride
My better feelings wrong;
And home is like a gloomy cell
Where only savage hearts should dwell!

SONNETS.

I.

The breast that would not feel this calm profound,
The eye that would not love this landscape fair,
Though in their mortal make beyond compare,
In spiritual life were senseless and unsound.
This glassy lake—the silent hills around—
The western clouds where rests, like woven air,
In tresses wild, the day god's golden hair—
All seem in sleep's divine enchantment bound.
Nor brute nor human form, nor cot nor cave,
Nor palace proud, nor sign nor sound of life
Is seen or heard; not lonelier is the grave;
And yet this lovely solitude is rife
With food for living thought, and few would crave
A holier refuge from the loud world's strife.

II.

But, ah! no scene of loveliness may last!
The earth is all mutation. Sunny skies—
The meadows gay—the sleeping lake that lies
A broad bright sheet of gold—are soon o'ercast.
O'er all these silent hills loud gales have past,
And erelong shall return. The gorgeous dyes
Of sun-set clouds,—the calm night's countless eyes,—
Shall vanish at the rude storm's trumpet-blast.
'Tis thus too with the soul. Eternal change
Of mood and passion seems her lot below;
Nature and man with kindred movement range
From fair to foul, from happiness to woe,
Again to light and joy—reversion strange—
And naught a long monotony may know.

III.

Yet well and wisely hath the poet said,
That "all exists by elemental strife,
And passions are the elements of life*."
This moving world were as a dreamless bed—
Grave of the living—if stagnation dread
Held in its base enthralment Nature's realm,
And man's unslumbering soul. Though storms o'erwhelm
Life's scene awhile, eternal stillness dead
Were heavier fate for human heart to bear.
We know not what we ask; but, blind and weak,
Madly neglect the blessings that we share,
And hidden evils ignorantly seek.
Oh! if his own fixed fate could man bespeak
How oft for change would rise the impatient prayer!

STANZAS WRITTEN AT SEA.

Like blossoms pale the vernal orchard strewing
The light foam sprinkles wide the billows green,
And flitting clouds, aerial sports pursuing,
Dapple and variegate the moving scene.

Through the stiff shrouds the gale is loudly singing
The big waves revel round our oaken walls
That reel and tremble, as if hosts were flinging
The thundering cannon's rampart-shaking balls.

But here no human foes with fierce commotion
Now meet in deadly strife for mastery vain;
The loud-voiced winds and vast uplifted ocean
Confess, with mighty mirth, their Maker's reign.

* Pope.

SONNET.

TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

THIS is the holiest day of all the year
To thy fond mother's heart. Thy natal morn
Unchanged returns. Still hope's bright rays adorn
The laughing scene, and round thy path appear
The flowers of life's fresh spring. Thy ravished ear
Is filled with pleasant sounds, and feelings born
Of sinless dreams, from dismal thoughts forlorn
Protect thy trusting spirit. All things cheer
The guileless and the true. Thine inward eye,
Undimmed by care or crime, may drink sweet hues
From every form, e'en where life's shadows lie.—
While all seems dark to souls that ne'er diffuse
A radiance of their own, the dreariest sky
A fancy pure with kindred light imbues!

SONNET—SUN-RISE.

How gloriously yon mighty monarch rears,
His proud resplendent brow—like Fame's first light
Breaking oblivion's gloom! His tresses bright
Inwreathe the rosy clouds. All nature wears
A bliss-reviving smile.—The glittering tears,
Shed by the pensive spirits of the night
Like verdant meadows, vanish from the sight,
Like rain-drops on the sea! The warm beam cheers
The drowsy herd, and thrills the feather'd throngs
Of early minstrels, whose melodious songs
Seem like a gush of joy. Now mortals send
Their orisons above, while shrubs and flowers
On whispering winds ambrosial odours blend,
To charm and consecrate the morning hours!

OTHELLO AND IAGO.

Let Jealousy
Distill her bane to taint their growing loves!
Light up resentment! fan the dangerous fire
With dark surmises, hints, invented tales,
'Till it burst all the tender bonds asunder
That knit their souls. —*Virginia.*

This jealousy
Is for a precious creature; as she's rare,
Must it be great; and as his person's mighty,
Must it be violent; and as he does conceive
He is dishonored by a man which ever
Professed to him, why his revenges must
In that be made more bitter.—*Winter's Tale.*

Colkridge gave it out as a discovery, that *Othello* was not jealous. This is either an idle truism or an outrageous paradox. If he meant that the Moor was not naturally suspicious, he merely echoed the general judgment; but if he really thought that the cunning insinuations of *Iago* instilled no jealousy into *Othello's* mind, and that it was not Shakespeare's intention to exhibit the progress and effects of that passion, his opinion is equally new and strange*.

It is true that the jealousy of the Moor is not of that despicable character which always anticipates evil, and is ever on the watch. He is not one of those sly and greedy listeners who, according to

* Dr. Lowth observes, "that the passion of jealousy, its causes, circumstances, progress, and effects, are more accurately, more copiously, more satisfactorily described in this one drama of Shakespeare, than in all the disputations of philosophy."

the vulgar proverb, never hear any good of themselves. He is not a Paul Pry. His is the jealousy of a fiery and impassioned nature that cannot brook a taint of dishonour either in love or war.

> " A savage jealousy that sometimes savours nobly."
>
> *Twelfth-Night.*

If his jealousy had been of that cast which characterizes mean and suspicious minds, instead of sympathizing with him in his afflictions, we should have regarded him with mingled hatred and contempt. His distress would have seemed a fitting punishment. Even if his jealousy had spontaneously arisen in his own heart, instead of its being forced upon him, as it was, by the circumvention of a fiend in human form, it would have greatly lessened our sympathy and respect. It is almost unnecessary to observe that it was not Shakespeare's desire to render him repulsive or contemptible, but on the contrary to compel us to love and honor him even while he is writhing with a passion which would have rendered a meaner nature intolerably hateful. Though he becomes the murderer of his spotless wife, he only deepens our pity. The more pure and precious was that angelic being, the heavier was his misfortune. We forget his guilt in his agony. Who does not sympathize with that terrible straining of the heart-strings, when the sense of his wife's death comes suddenly home to his apprehension, while *Amelia* is knocking at the chamber-door?

> " If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
> My wife! my wife! what wife!—I have no wife.
> O, insupportable! O, heavy hour!"

We never cease to remember, that it was the intensity of his love and the boundless confidence of his friendship that exposed him to the subtle treachery of *Iago*. We could not despise him for his credulity without insulting virtue. It is not the credulity of weakness like that of *Roderigo,* who by the dark-lantern

of his own mean imagination sometimes catches a slight glimpse of the dreadful interior of *Iago's* mind, and then all is veiled again. A noble spirit like that of *Othello* could form no conception of those hideous images that haunt the obscure cells of a villain's brain. But the Moor and *Roderigo** were not the only dupes of the plotting and malignant "ancient." He must have deceived even the more keen and worldly-minded of his associates, for he had obtained such a character for truth and frankness that they must have been nearly as tired of hearing of the honesty of *Iago* as the Athenians of the justice of Aristides. That *Othello* should have rejected as he did, the first suggestions of *Iago*, insinuated with such consummate address, and with such apparent reluctance, shows that he was not "easily jealous," though "being wrought, perplexed in the extreme." No man could have wholly resisted the shrewd hints and the circumstantial evidence adduced by *Iago*, backed as they were by his reputation for sincerity.

When the poison of jealousy has once fairly entered the heart, the most trivial circumstances tend to strengthen and confirm its influence; but with such a man as *Othello*, the misery is not at first self-inflicted. The Moor was the very reverse of a suspicious character, which is always a mean one. In the words of Dr. Johnson, he was magnanimous, artless, and credulous—ardent in his affection, and *boundless in his confidence*. Even *Iago*, who "knew all qualities with a learned spirit of human dealing," repeatedly acknowledges the generous trustfulness and high character of the man whom he hates.

> "The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not,—
> Is of a constant, loving, noble nature;
> And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
> A most dear husband."

---

* How different is the simplicity of the Moor from the simplicity of Roderigo!

And it is from a due consideration of the Moor's "free and open nature," that *Iago* is induced to depend for the purposes of his revenge upon the effect of such subtle insinuations as *Othello*, believing him to be *honest*, was compelled to credit.

> "The Moor is of a free and open nature,
> That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so;
> And will as easily be led by the nose,
> As asses are."

Othello had too much fire in his soul to suffer him to play the mean and dilatory and patient part of a man naturally suspicious, who is always lying in wait for opportunities to discover his own misery and dishonour, and who treasures up long and greedily the minute evidences that feed his hateful passion. "Think'st thou," he exclaims—

> "Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
> To follow still the changes of the moon
> With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt,
> Is once to be resolved."

When he is sent by the Senate on the expedition to Cyprus, with what perfect confidence he places his young and lovely wife in the charge of *Iago*; and when *Brabantio* says,

> "Look to her, Moor; have a quick eye to see;
> She has deceived her father, and may thee."

What is his answer?

> "*My life upon her faith!*"

And to show, out of his own mouth, how little he was inclined to insist upon a strict surveillance of his wife, or to build his doubts of her fidelity on trifles, let me quote part of his speech to *Iago*, even after that artful villain had poured the first drops of bitterness into *Othello's* cup. It is not the language of a man originally disposed to be mistrustful.

> ——— "'Tis not to make me jealous,
> To say—my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,

Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous;
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me; no, Iago;
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy."

When a man is naturally disposed to indulge the passion of jealousy, never does he exhibit it more strongly than when he is first working his way into the affections of his mistress; and *Othello* from being a mere soldier, "rude in speech and little blessed with the set phrase of peace," and having a complexion and cast of features that he was quite conscious were not generally attractive to the Venetian ladies, might have been excused some little anxiety respecting the possible triumph of his rivals. Her father never supposed for a moment that his reception of *Othello's* visits would lead to so strange a match, and when the event actually occurred he was so perplexed and bewildered, that he could only attribute it to supernatural arts.

" She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not." ———

And even the pert *Emilia* could not help expressing her surprise that *Desdemona* had forsaken so many noble matches on his account. In her generous passion at the suspicions of the Moor in one of the latter scenes of the play, she boldly tells him to his face that *Desdemona* was " but too fond of her most filthy bargain." Yet notwithstanding *Othello's* manifest disadvantages as a lover and a lady's man, of which he was so fully conscious, *Desdemona* never seems to have discovered in him, until the poison infused by *Iago* had worked its effect, the slighest indication of jealousy. After the scene of the handkerchief, when

Emilia asks *if this man is not jealous, Desdemona* answers with an exclamation that she "*ne'er saw this before.*" In a preceding part of the same scene the following dialogue occurs.

> *Des.*—Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?
> *Emil.*—I know not, Madam.
> *Des.*—Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
> Full of cruzadoes. *And but my noble Moor*
> *Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness*
> *As jealous creatures are, it were enough*
> *To put him to ill-thinking.*
> *Emil.*—Is he not jealous?
> *Des.*—Who, he? I think the sun, where he was born
> Drew all such humours from him.

I repeat my opinion, that *Othello* was not *naturally* jealous, but on the contrary of a most trustful and generous disposition. *Shakespeare's* object, it appears, was not to display the petty and never-resting suspicions of a little mind, but to exhibit a fearful picture of the tempest and desolation and delirium into which its sudden admission may throw the noblest natures.

If *Othello* had not been affected by the evidence so artfully brought forward by *Iago*, whom he looked upon as a zealous and disinterested friend, and whose good faith had never been suspected by himself or others, whose *honesty* in fact was proverbial, we might have fairly censured him for his blind and overweening confidence in his wife's constancy, or his own power over her affections. He would in that case have almost deserved dishonor. We ought not to forget that we are behind the scene, and know more than the unhappy *Othello* himself of the true characters and designs of the individual actors. When the light breaks in upon him and he discovers how completely he has been deluded, his amazement is even stronger than his anger. When *Iago* is brought before him, he looks to see if he is *cloven-footed.*

> *Othello.*—I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable:
> If that thou be'est a devil, I cannot kill thee.

It would be easy to add to these extracts many others of a similar tendency. But it is not necessary. I shall give but one more brief quotation and conclude. It is *Othello's* character from his own mouth, and I think it a true one.

> I pray you in your letters,
> Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice ; then must you speak
> Of one, who loved not wisely, but too well ;
> Of one, NOT EASILY JEALOUS, BUT BEING WROUGHT,
> PERPLEXED IN THE EXTREME.

The character of *Iago* has been compared with that of *Zanga* in Young's tragedy of *The Revenge*. But we might as well compare a Saracen's head on a sign-post with one of Rembrandt's portraits. Hazlitt justly styles it a vulgar caricature. Dr. Gregory in one of his letters informs us, that when he was a very young man he used to think *Zanga* a better drawn character than *Iago*, but that more knowledge of the world convinced him of his error. In an edition of *The Revenge*, now before me, the editor remarks that "though similar in some degree, to the story of Shakespeare's Othello, the motives for resentment in *Zanga* are of a more noble and consistent nature, and the credulous object of his deadly hatred more excusable and more pitied in yielding to his fate." It is not worth any one's while to contradict this nonsense. I suspect, the critic must have studied Rymer's "Reflections on Shakespeare" in his "Short View of Tragedy." That critic, with an exquisite refinement of thought and phraseology, styles "the tragic part of *Othello* a bloody farce, without salt or savour;" and being of opinion I suppose, that "great events" ought not to spring from "trivial causes," maintains that "the handkerchief is so remote a trifle that no booby on this side of Mauritania could make any consequence from it*."

* An English writer would be looked upon as a madman, who in the present day should speak in the style of Rymer of Shakespeare's productions; but when that critic published his insults on our great Bard (in 1793) they seem

The different conceptions which are formed of the characters in Shakespeare's plays may seem to some critics to be an argument against their truth and nature. It is exactly the reverse. It is a glorious proof of that dramatic power which enabled him so entirely to forget himself—to enter into the heart of others—and to pourtray men exactly as they are, in every change of position and with all their inconsistencies, both real and apparent. To understand them thoroughly requires the same studious observation and knowledge of human nature, as are employed in an intelligent intercourse with the living world. His characters are not described;—they act. They are not allegorical personages. They are not automatons or lay figures. They "live and move and have their being." The characters in the plays of those poets who do not possess the dramatic faculty, however capable may be the writers of pourtraying with truth and vigour their

to have excited neither astonishment nor indignation. We may form a pretty good notion of what was Rymer's idea of dramatic excellence from his having termed Sackville's *Gordobuc*, "a fable better turned for tragedy than any on this side of the Alps, in the time of Lord Buckhurst (Sackville), and might have been a better direction to Shakespeare and Ben Jonson than any guide they have had the luck to follow." Rymer is especially angry that Shakespeare should have given rank and reputation to "*a Negro*." "*With us*," he says, "*a Blackamoor might rise to be a trumpeter, but Shakespeare would not have him less than a Lieutenant-General.*" He is apparently ignorant of the fact that in Morocco the Negroes were in such high repute for their warlike qualities that they constituted the most considerable part of the Emperor's army, and were generally appointed to the government of provinces and towns. He thinks it an insult to the profession of arms that *Iago* is a soldier, as if a red coat must charm away all impurities, or cover, like charity, a multitude of sins; or in other words that in certain human flocks that are blessed with Rymer's approbation, there can be no black sheep. The noble character of Cassio, or that of Othello himself, is not to be considered as a set-off against the villainy of Iago. Rymer has fallen into well-merited oblivion, and yet Dryden "himself, the best critic of his time," characterizes one of the critiques in the volume containing these literary blasphemies, as "*excellent*." And in his preface to the Fables styles him "our learned Mr. Rymer"—"that great critic who deserves no little commendation from us his countrymen." Pope also has styled him "one of the best critics we ever had." Johnson, in his life of Dryden, draws a parallel between him and Rymer. "Dryden's criticism," says he, "has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant."

own feelings, are by no means so difficult of comprehension. Not being persons but descriptions, he who runs may read them. They remind us of caricatures, with labels in their mouths, or paintings accompanied with written explanations. In the tragedies of vulgar writers there is always a kind of flourish of trumpets and enter a showman, while the "live lions stuffed with straw" display at once all their fair proportions. *How natural!* is the instant exclamation of the same crowd, who are struck with the incomprehensible inconsistencies of Shakespeare's characters! It is always thus with superficial observers. They see not that the human character is of "a mingled yarn," and discover only the broader traits unqualified by those nice gradations and varieties of shade, those virtues that border upon vice, and those vices that lean to virtue's side, which are often so mysteriously blended in the same human being. This ignorance of our nature is the cause of the instability of friendships. The people of whom I speak know but of two characters in the world—a good man and a wicked man. When they discover a single vice or failing in one whom they had placed in the former class, they instantly transfer him to the latter, and cut the connection. They generally add to this injustice by attributing the mistake to the culprit's hypocrisy, instead of to their own want of discernment.

We are told by Collins, in a compliment to Fletcher, at the expense of a greater poet, that

"Stronger Shakespeare felt for *man* alone."

Even Dryden has expressed a similar opinion. Several later critics too have remarked, that the female characters in Shakespeare's plays are less prominently marked and less variously distinguished than those of the sterner sex. If this criticism is to be taken in a *depreciating* sense, I will venture to assert that it is quite erroneous, and that, in fact, the objection might be very fairly turned into a compliment. We often hear objections

made to certain characters in Shakespeare's plays that only tend to shew more unequivocally the perfect truth and nature of the poet's delineations; and the criticism, just alluded to, is of this description. If Shakespeare had brought out the lines of his female characters as strongly as those of the other sex, he would have been guilty of an error into which he of all men was the least likely to be led. His knowledge of human nature was nearly infallible, indeed almost god-like; and he well knew that in spite of occasional and even striking deviations arising from original organization or accidental circumstances, the fairer and gentler half of our kind are less individually distinguished by prominent and peculiar traits than the *Lords* of the creation. Partly from their primal nature and partly from the uniformity of their conventional condition, they are generally as like one another in their moral and intellectual character as in the delicacy of their external conformation. The characters of men are necessarily more diversified, owing to the greater variety of positions into which they are thrown, and the many powerful excitements which stir their minds and hearts to the lowest depths. The nearly all-absorbing passion of a woman's breast is love, but, as Byron has made Julia in Don Juan finely tell us, men indulge in a variety of other emotions of equal strength.

> " Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
> '*Tis woman's whole existence* ; man may range
> The court, camp, church, the vessel and the mart,
> Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange;
> Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
> And few there are whom these cannot estrange;
> Men have all these resources; we but one,
> To love again, and be again undone."

As all men and women, are very much the creatures of circumstances, the comparative uniformity in the character of the one and the endless variety in the character of the other, present a problem not very difficult of solution. Still, however,

nature does not allow of an absolutely perfect similitude between any two living creatures. There are no two countenances in every respect alike, and still more positive is the diversity of minds. To the general eye a flock of sheep presents no distinction excepting that of size or colour; but the shepherd knows every face by its peculiar lineaments, as perfectly as a father knows the features of his children. In the same way, a profound student of human life, may often trace individual distinctions in the crowd, which escape the notice of ordinary observers. These minute and subtle traits, our great dramatic poet has shown us reflected in that mirror which he so successfully held up to nature; but it happens that as he did not exaggerate the truth to make it palpable to the more vulgar eye, the finer distinctions which are unseen in the reality by common observers are equally unrecognized in the imitation, by common readers. Pope has told us that

"Most women have no character at all;"

and it is quite true that they have none whatever, if that only is to be called a character which all who run may read. But we will not echo the smart but shallow dogmas of the leading "wit" of the days of Anne. We would rather go back to the time of Elizabeth, and listen to the philosophy of Shakespeare, who contradicts, by anticipation, the satirist's flippant libel upon the gentlest and fairest of all God's creatures. In the pages of the Prince of dramatists, we meet again with many of those lovely and delightful beings whose delicate varieties of character enchant us in real life. But what can be worse than the women in Dryden's plays. They are without delicacy or shame.

The tragedy of *Othello* has lately been acted with very considerable success at the Chowringhee Theatre in Calcutta. The gentleman who undertook the principal character is an imitator of Kean; though one of the Calcutta critics insists that he is an

imitator of Kemble. If the Indian Amateur really takes the latter for his model, he imitates him "most abominably," and falls by an odd fatality into the directly opposite style of a greater though less perfect actor. But whether Kean or Kemble be the object of his imitation, this is certain, that he bears a much closer resemblance to the former than to the classical and judicious Kemble. I do not maintain that he copies Kean in the way in which the great actor's son imitates his father—by a mimicry of all his characteristic movements, crowded into a single passage. The long pause—the frequent start—the sarcastic smile—the wild convulsive laugh—the sudden change of voice from the full roar of passion to the light easy tones of familiar dialogue—the low hurried mutterings of suppressed agitation—the hasty strides—the rude tugs at his unoffending garments—the play of the fingers on the folded arms—the slow patting of the breast, and the vice-like grasp of the forehead;—all these mannerisms, sometimes electrically effective, were turned by the younger Kean into a laughable caricature. It is not, indeed, in this style that the gentleman alluded to imitates a man of genius, who, though the most powerful of modern actors, is also the most dangerous model that an histrionic aspirant could select for study. Many of Kean's peculiarities of manner are traceable in this gentleman's performance of impassioned parts, but they are not glaring or offensive, and he does not seem to have confounded that actor's idiosyncrasies with his excellencies*.

* Two or three of the other actors on this occasion did great injustice to their own powers by giving way to a painful and unfounded apprehension of failure. Amateur actors in general are not perhaps sufficiently aware of the effect which may be produced upon an audience by very mediocre talents, when accompanied by perfect ease and self-possession. In their awe and anxiety their judgment quite deserts them, and it is to no purpose they work themselves up for convulsive exertions at what they regard as the only *telling* points. This high straining only makes them the more deplorably nerveless and

The *Othello* was very powerfully supported by the *Iago* of a gentleman well known in Calcutta as an excellent amateur actor. His conception of the part of *Iago* was strong and true, and his execution as firm and spirited as could be desired. He appeared to have no misgivings on the stage, but to have thoroughly conquered all doubts in the closet. Perhaps the character was made now and then a little too glaringly villainous. The appellation of *honest Iago* sounded oddly, when applied to a man sneaking into the room with a slow cautious gait, and a sinister expression of blended fear and malice. It interfered with our respect for *Othello*, who began to look too much like *a gull*. This was precisely Young's mistake in the same part. He wore too black a brow—the blackness should have appeared in his deeds and not in his looks, when he was in the presence of those against whose peace he was plotting, and before whom he had a certain

relaxed when the sudden burst of animation as suddenly subsides. They are then as much too low as they were before too high. Anxious and desperate timidity always misses the mark. It is better for a debutant to be less ambitious of occasional displays until he has felt his way. In the first instance he should aim rather at an uniform propriety than at fine starts and striking passages; because even if he occasionally succeeds in some measure in a solitary and hard-studied point, the contrast with his general tameness only the more conspicuously betrays his labour, and shows that he has no genuine or continuous feeling of his part. All illusion is then destroyed, his identity is no longer involved in his assumed character, and the audience recognize only the imperfect actor. It is safer, therefore, to be a little too cold or tame in the emphatic passages than to make them start out abruptly from the timid restraint of the general performance, for nothing can be more strikingly unnatural and ineffective than inequalities of this nature. The finest delivery of a single highly impassioned burst, would be ridiculous in a man who throughout the rest of his performance should exhibit a personification of awkward apathy. He would remind us of an automaton just wound up and put into temporary motion. If an actor were to do little more than *walk through his part* with entire self-possession, he would not so glaringly betray his unfitness as by these ridiculous out-breaks. We have an actress on the Chowringhee Boards who never by any chance falls into these inconsistencies. I allude to Mrs. Leach. She gives the finest and fullest expression to emphatic passages, and yet her humblest by-play has an air of entire truth and reality. She never drops her arms, stands still, and stares at the audience. As long as she is on the stage she feels that she has a part to perform, and she always performs it well.

character to support. There is an anecdote in some theatrical publication of the performance of Cooke in this character. It is said that a man in the gallery exclaimed *what a villain!* and called for his expulsion. Did we not remember that the audience have a knowledge of circumstances of which *Othello* is ignorant, we should pronounce an effect of this nature to be no compliment to, but rather a condemnation of the actor. *Iago* is a general deceiver. It is wrong to put a Cain-mark upon his forehead. It must have been, an ever-present consciousness of this truth that caused Kean to err on the other side, by making him too gay. It should never be forgotten in theatrical critiques, that in all representations on the stage the audience are in one sense of the phrase *behind the scenes*. They are mere lookers-on, and see all the secret springs and movements. They have a key to each character. As *Iago* proceeds in his demoniacal work, his villainy is so palpable to the audience that they are apt to be betrayed into a very unreasonable surprise that it is not equally evident to the whole of the Dramatis Personæ.

It has been thought that the character of *Iago* is in some degree unnatural, inasmuch as there is not a sufficient motive for his atrocious conduct. Perhaps this objection is not *entirely* unfounded. Hazlitt pronounces it more nice than wise. That writer was a profound and subtle critic, when he could bring himself to be quite impartial. He was at other times either a fierce hater or an equally fierce admirer. With respect to his Shakespearian creed, he was a thorough bigot, and seemed to think the poet as infallible as the Pope. But the sun of that mighty genius, glorious as it is, has far more spots upon its disk than many luminaries of lesser magnitude and brightness. Few great poets could so little justify an unqualified admiration. I am far from maintaining that the character of *Iago* is actually or altogether unnatural; but I think that even Shakespeare himself had some misgivings on this score, and had

anticipated the very objection which Hazlitt combats. It was on this account, perhaps, that he has made *Iago* express a suspicion that both the Moor and *Cassio* had dishonored him as a husband. The thing seems improbable in itself, and is so awkwardly introduced and has so little effect, that it looks very like an afterthought or interpolation. It is forgotten as soon as mentioned. The desire of obtaining *Cassio's* place, and of revenging himself on the Moor for his selection of that officer in preference to himself, does not seem a sufficient motive for his fiendish Machiavelism. Besides, it seems unlikely that such a cautious and clear-minded observer of human nature as *Iago* should not have reflected, that to succeed in proving *Desdemona* faithless would be to make *Othello* fancy himself

> "A fixéd figure for the hand of scorn
> To point his slowly moving finger at—"

and to deprive him of that precious charm in which he had "garnered up his heart,"

> "Where either he must live, or bear no life."

He must have known, that he could not have long continued an agreeable object to *Othello's* eye. "The first bringer of unwelcome news hath but a losing office." It must be remembered, however, that *Iago* did not himself see his own way with perfect clearness and precision. His plans were at first confused and undefined, and the course of events became more fearful than he had expected. Crime after crime entailed the necessity of deeper and deeper guilt, and he became himself involved in a hideous labyrinth of his own creating. The total destruction of his victims was at first as little contemplated as his own. Had a pause in his horrible career been consistent with his own safety and success, there is no reason to suppose that he would have desired so dreadful a consummation of his revenge.

Othello is perhaps the most thoroughly *dramatic* of all Shakespeare's Plays, and is certainly one of the very noblest productions

of his genius. In none of the works of this matchless writer is there a more powerful display of human passion; in none of them is the heart more entirely laid open. It is not, however, in *every* respect his best performance. I cannot help saying a word or two in this place (however awkwardly introduced) respecting a play of a very opposite character. I allude to that of Hamlet, a production which seems to have been an especial favourite with the author himself, if we may judge from his careful revision of it, and the internal evidence it affords of great care and study.

The elements of passion in *Othello* are more simple, and are more easily painted and more readily comprehended and sympathized with than the ethereal movements of *Hamlet's* mind. *Hamlet* is a purely intellectual character. His actions and even his feelings have little interest, but as they indicate the metaphysical movements of his spirit. Never was there a being clothed in the attributes of humanity more nearly allied to a superior nature. He is in the world, but not of it; and all the apparent inconsistencies of his conduct seem but the necessary consequence of a being of a purely spiritual nature endeavouring to act in an element which is altogether strange and uncongenial to him. When he gets into the busy world, he is quite out of his sphere. He very naturally exclaims,

> "The time is out of joint—
> O cursèd spite that ever I was born to set it right."

He is a mere *thinker*. He thinks when he ought to act. His qualities are not duly balanced. He is a child in action.

It might be thought by a superficial critic that he has a better head than heart. It has been said that his treatment of *Ophelia* is not merely rude and harsh, but absolutely brutal, and the cool way in which he plans the death of his two school-fellows, shows that he is quite devoid of any natural tenderness of disposition. That in fact he is lacadaisical, cowardly, and cold-hearted; a truly unmanly character; and that he sinks into utter insignificance when

contrasted with the generous Moor who "loved not wisely, but too well." When *Othello* is about to kill *Desdemona*, he gives her time to prepare herself for the awful change.

> " *Othello.*—I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
> No,—heaven forefend! I would not kill thy soul.
> *Desdemona.*—Talk you of killing?
> *Oth.*—Ay, I do.
> *Des.*—Then heaven
> Have mercy on me!
> *Oth.*—Amen with all my heart!"

There will at first appear much in favor of *Othello* and against *Hamlet*, if we compare the above passage with the dreadful soliloquy of the latter when he beholds his uncle at his prayers. He is half tempted to kill him at that moment, but reflecting that a man is never better prepared for death than in the hour of prayer, " in the purging of his soul, when he is fit and seasoned for his passage," he exclaims.

> " Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent;
> When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
> Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed:
> At gaming, swearing, or about some act,
> That has no relish of salvation in't:
> Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;
> And that his soul may be as damned and black,
> As hell, whereto he goes."

Dr. Johnson observes that this speech in the mouth of a character intended to be a virtuous one, is too horrible to be read or uttered. Monk-Mason, Steevens and Malone all comment on it in a similar spirit of indignation.

That so many commentators should have failed to enter thoroughly into the character of *Hamlet*, is no argument against the skill and truth with which it is delineated. We must very carefully refer to human nature, before we can judge with accuracy and precision of Shakespeare's imitations. We are not to look upon *Hamlet* as a perfect character. We must leave it to such a writer as

the author of Sir Charles Grandison to paint suns without a spot. Neither has Shakespeare, in this instance, intended to represent a character having such a share of virtue as the best specimens of humanity may be supposed to possess. Still, however, he is not quite so wicked a personage as some commentators have imagined. In fact to be as *Hamlet* is, as this world goes, is to be as one man picked out of ten thousand. I speak in a *moral* point of view. As an *intellectual* being, he is raised in a still higher degree above the great mass of mankind. The alleged brutality of *Hamlet's* conduct to *Ophelia* is to be attributed partly to his assumed, and partly to his actual distraction of mind; his behaviour to pretended friends, but real spies and traitors, was occasioned by his sense of the danger of his own position, and his disgust and indignation at the part which they had volunteered to act against him; and with respect to his speech concerning the king at his prayers, nothing could be more characteristic of the amiability of his disposition, and the tendency of his mind to adopt any plausible excuse for postponing to some future period an act of so terrible a character as that of depriving a fellow-creature of the life God has given him. He satisfies his conscience, in the postponement of a harsh but imperative duty, with the thought that he may perform it more effectually under different circumstances. He promises the ghost of his father, that he will haste to his revenge with wings as swift as thought; but his natural gentleness, his delicate moral sensibility, and his disposition to canvass the propriety of every action before he ventures upon it, lead him into endless procrastination; and when he does act at all, it is from some sudden impulse, and a kind of uneasy consciousness that he must not give himself time to deliberate, or he would want the will to act. That he was not a coward, in the vulgar sense of the word, his coolness in the engagement with *Laertes* is a sufficient proof.

MYSTERIES.

Ah ! this were but a weary world
Without its hopes and fears ;—
A pool by no light breezes curled
A cheerless sight appears :
A smooth interminable plain
Is sadder than the stormy main ;
Yet these similitudes would be
Of life's long, dull monotony,
If human sighs and human tears
Ne'er stirred, nor stained the stream of years.

* * * * * * *

Oh ! God ! there are who madly dare
To question thine eternal will ;
Who own this glorious globe is fair,
Yet mourn permitted ill ;
And deem it strange Almighty power
Should yield to sin one mortal hour ;
Or suffer care, and pain, and strife,
To chequer all the scenes of life ;
Or let one dreary shadow lie
Between us and eternity.

They see not what the wise might see,
(Lost wanderers in the storm !)
How far above mortality,
As man above the worm,
Is He whose awful glory seems
Impalpable to earthly dreams.

Yet man to mournful blindness given
Would pierce the mystic veil of heaven,
And with delirious boldness scan
His unseen Maker's secret plan ;
Forgetful that he could not part
The curtain of his own proud heart !

SONNET, WRITTEN IN INDIA.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

The moon was shrouded ; cold, continuous rain
Fell on the grove with melancholy sound ;
The jackal's distant cry, the voice profound
Of Gunga's rolling wave, like moans of pain,
Came on the midnight blast ! Hill, vale, and plain
Lay in impenetrable gloom o'ercast,
Save when the fitful meteor glimmered past,
Or the blue lightning lit the drear domain !—
Lo ! what a glorious change ! The rising sun
Spreads wide his living light ! The fragrant bower
Ringing with morning hymns—the stately tower—
The shepherd's simple home, alike have won
The cheerful smile of heaven. Fair Nature's dower
Of beauty is restored, and Care's brief reign is done !

NATURE.

I.

THE fair smile of morning,
The glory of noon,
The bright stars adorning
The path of the moon;
The sky-mingled mountain,
The valley and plain,
The lake and the fountain,
The river and main;
Their magic refining,
And raising the soul,
Its care and repining,
Illume and controul.

II.

The timid Spring stealing
Through light and perfume,
The Summer revealing
His beauty and bloom;
The rich Autumn glowing
With fruit-treasures crowned,
The pale Winter throwing
His snow-wreaths around;
All widely diffusing
A charm on the earth,
Wake loftiest musing,
And holiest mirth.

III.

There is not a sorrow
That hath not a balm,
From Nature to borrow,
In tempest or calm;
There is not a season,
There is not a scene,
But Fancy and Reason
May hail it serene,
And own its possessing
A zest for the glad,
A beauty or blessing
To solace the sad!

SONG.

A glorious fate is thine, fair Maid!
The green earth and the sky
Nor bear an ill, nor cast a shade
To dim thine azure eye.

Thy soul is flashing o'er thy face,
Where bright emotions play,
As waves o'er breezy rivers race
Beneath the morning ray.

My path was lone, and all around
The ruthless storm had been,
And life had not a sight or sound
To cheer the clouded scene.

But now my darker dreams depart,
Thy form and voice are near,
A light is on my raptured heart,
And music in my ear!

ON FOUR COMIC CHARACTERS:

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, DON QUIXOTE, SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY AND MY UNCLE TOBY.

THE finest comic characters that human genius has yet familiarized to the imagination of mankind, are Sir John Falstaff, Don Quixote, Sir Roger de Coverley, and My Uncle Toby. He who has once become acquainted with these unrivalled intellectual creations, (as substantial as flesh and blood,) has increased the number of his associates with four delightful beings, who will never leave him while he breathes the breath of life. These comic personages are not like the slight and vulgar sketches of ordinary nature or of mere manners, that we generally meet with in the page of fiction, and which

"Come like shadows, so depart."

The majority of modern novelists perplex us with shadowy shapes that leave no trace behind them, but these four characters are as distinct to our apprehension as living creatures, and have an individuality founded upon general nature that renders them equally intelligible and pleasing to all times and nations. It is strange that no critic has yet thought of bringing into contact and comparison these masterpieces of comic genius. In the hope that some writer who has more ability for the task, may be induced to pursue the subject further, we venture to offer the following very imperfect remarks and illustrations.

It is interesting to remember, that Shakespeare and Cervantes were contemporaries, and that they finished their mortal career

upon the same day. Lope de Vega, who has been called the Spanish Shakespeare, flourished about the same period; but though a successful dramatist, he was not so nearly allied in genius to our own great poet as Cervantes. It is true, that Lope de Vega was a better playwright than the author of Don Quixote, but he stands considerably lower as a man of genius. As a dramatist, Cervantes was singularly unsuccessful, and was a striking illustration of the strange truth, that a man may display a rich dramatic invention in a romance or novel, and fail entirely in writing for the theatre. In later times and in our own country, Fielding and Sir Walter Scott have both shown, that the order of mind which supplies a prose fiction with dramatic scenes and characters, is not precisely the same as that which produces and adapts a picture of human life for representation on the stage. The novelist excels chiefly in description and narration, the dramatist in dialogue; and though we often see fine dramatic *materials* in a well-conceived novel, there is rarely at the same time that unaccountable skill or instinct or intuition which is displayed by a genuine dramatist in making the several creatures of his brain develop their own peculiar characters. In the same way we are sometimes puzzled at observing all the elements of rich and beautiful poetry in a prose romance by a writer, whose brain seems as barren as winter the moment he attempts a regular poem. It would lead us too far from our present purpose if we were to make any attempt to account for these well known facts in the world of intellect.

We have reason to know that Cervantes could not have written plays like those of Shakespeare; but it is quite certain, that he has produced a comic character that is as perfect in its way as old Jack Falstaff himself. It has probably indeed given pleasure to a much greater number of readers, for the far-famed romance of Cervantes has been translated into every European language. The author was neglected, but his book was extremely popular

from the moment of its publication, which was eight or nine years after the appearance of the first and second parts of Shakespeare's King Henry the Fourth. Though Cervantes was suffered to languish in poverty and neglect, it is said that Philip III. was delighted with his romance, and was fully aware of its popularity*. It is added, that one day standing in a balcony of his palace, his Majesty perceived a student on the bank of a river, reading a book, and every now and then striking his forehead and bursting into fits of laughter. That man, said his majesty, is either mad or reading Don Quixote. Some courtiers went out to satisfy their curiosity, and found that his Majesty had made a happy guess, the student being actually engaged in reading the adventures of the valorous Knight of La Mancha. Our own Charles the Second had *Hudibras*† by heart, and yet allowed the unhappy author to starve in the streets of his metropolis.

It is quite possible that Shakespeare himself had held his sides over the ludicrous misfortunes of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, for English literature in the time of Elizabeth was rich in translations from the continental languages, and it is very unlikely that so famous a work as Don Quixote should have been neglected by the linguists who supplied the English literary market with foreign rarities. At all events we may be certain that no one would have relished its humour with a greater *gusto*,

* It is melancholy indeed to remember that men whom the world adore have died in beggary. Cervantes, who has given so much delight to mankind, was so reduced as to be compelled to beg for his support, and to receive assistance by the hands of the servants of his patrons. Camoens, the great Portuguese poet, supported his last moments by alms which his black servant gathered in the streets of Lisbon. After the death of Cervantes five cities of Spain disputed for the honor of having given him birth. He reminds us of the fate of Homer.

"Seven wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

† *Hudibras* is a vast storehouse of wit, but after all it is too local and temporary to give lasting or general pleasure. If regarded as an imitation of Don Quixote it is undoubtedly a failure and full of incongruities. But all imitations of the romance of Cervantes are very unsuccessful. Smollett's Sir Launcelot Greaves is his poorest production.

had he enjoyed that opportunity, than he who introduced into the world the delightful Jack Falstaff.

There are as many striking points of opposition between Sir John Falstaff and Don Quixote as if they had proceeded from the same brain, and were expressly intended to illustrate each other upon the principle of contrast. Sir John is all plumpness and merriment.

"The fattest hog in Epicurus' sty."

The hero of La Mancha, is a mere anatomy, and has a presence as sad and solemn as a mute's. The one is uniformly cheerful, the other uniformly solemn. The one is absorbed in sensual delights, and abhors the remotest idea of pain or danger; the other voluntarily endures the pangs of hunger, exults in the severity of his trials, and only seems to exist when life itself is threatened. The humour of the one character consists in the transformation of the sublime into the ridiculous, that of the other in the exaggeration of trifles and common-places into a romantic importance and magnificence. Falstaff turns the weightiest business of human life into a jest, and Don Quixote converts the dirty sluts at the doors of miserable inns into radiant princesses at the gates of stately castles, and turns a barber's brass bason into Membrino's helmet.

Sir John Falstaff is a gentleman by birth and education, but his principles are destroyed by a preponderance of the animal propensities. Don Quixote is also a gentleman, but under the most humiliating circumstances he preserves the best attributes of that character entirely unimpaired. Falstaff is a coward and a liar, but the Knight of La Mancha is brave and honorable*.

* In Morgan's ingenious but paradoxical Essay on the character of Falstaff, he tries hard to persuade the world that Jack Falstaff is no coward. Perhaps he is not a coward from mere constitutional timidity, but it is clear that he is a coward on reflection:—that is to say, that he prefers a safe life and a cup of sack to the chances of death and glory. He never seems to want

The latter is too proud to be mean, while the former is too vain to be great. Sir Philip Sidney, the observed of all observers, is not a truer hero or gentleman than Don Quixote. His solitary imperfection is an obliquity of mind on a single subject. He is on all other points as sane and judicious as could be desired. Even this one imperfection is occasioned by an excess of generous impulses—the credulity and extravagance of a noble nature. But Falstaff deviates as much from true wisdom, and discovers a far more deplorable alienation of mind, when he imagines that there is no pleasure but what is derived from sensual excitements, and that man approaches the extreme point of felicity in proportion as he sinks his nature to that of a beast. It is better to mistake an inn for a castle, than to suppose the sole enjoyment of a rational being to consist in sack and debauchery. Falstaff's life is that of mere flesh and blood. It is shared by the lower creation. His intellectual powers evaporate in a witticism, but his sensual propensities are pampered and gratified to their utmost capability of enjoyment. Falstaff has no love for woman beyond the sensual. Don Quixote's is pure and ideal. Even their corporeal frames are in keeping with this contrast of character. Falstaff is a huge hill of flesh—a horse-back breaker. Don Quixote is mere bones and armour, that when struck in conflict seem to rattle in unison. Even the miserable Rozinante finds his master a man of no substance. Falstaff would crush the poor animal to the earth. The Knight, however severely pommelied, is in no danger of a fever. You might as well anticipate an apoplexy in a skele-

presence of mind. He has always so much coolness in the midst of danger as to give utterance to the most ingenious witticisms; and nothing requires more presence of mind than wit. But he is too much of an Epicurean to risk substantial pudding for empty praise. Though not indifferent to glory, he loves life better. It is a bad compliment to Shakespeare to maintain, that Falstaff is in no sense of the word a coward; for if Mr. Morgan is correct, the dramatist has failed to give the impression he intended.

ton. Starvation is scarcely a hardship to him. He has no flesh and blood requiring nutriment.

Don Quixote and Sir John Falstaff equally excite our mirth, but the one is not only the cause of wit in others, but he is witty himself and relishes a joke. Whereas the other never smiles. Nothing but his wit and good humour save the English Knight from absolute contempt, and nothing saves the Spaniard but his virtue and valour. We as often laugh *with* Falstaff as *at* him, but Quixote never shares the joke. He gives it up to us entirely. The humour of the Spanish romance, with a characteristic national bias, depends chiefly on the solemn gravity of the Knight and the simplicity and phlegm of the Squire. The more grave and austere is Quixote, the more the reader gives way to his inextinguishable laughter*. It adds a peculiar zest to the humour of the scene in which poor Sancho is tossed in the blanket, when the author tells us, that as the round-bodied squire rose and fell in the air, *he is clearly of opinion*, that even the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance himself, if it had not been for his extreme indignation, *would have laughed outright*. Falstaff exhibits gaiety and ease in the most trying circumstances, while Quixote is grave and solemn under the most exhilarating.

But though there is more wit than humour in Falstaff, and no wit and infinite humour in the character of the lean Knight of La Mancha, we must not speak too profanely of the attributes of Shakespeare. Gifford, in his edition of Massinger, has dared to assert that it is in wit, and in no other quality, that Shakespeare is unsurpassed by other writers. This is poor praise indeed, for the greatest of all dramatists, ancient or modern. A mere writer

* Some of the incidents in the romance are so filthy, that they would turn our stomach if they did not shake our sides. If Don Quixote and Sancho had themselves laughed when they vomited upon each other, the reader's feeling would have been that of pure disgust. But their extreme gravity and distress provoke our mirth.

or utterer of witticisms, does not stand particularly high in the scale of intellectual excellence.

Wit is infinitely below humour, because it may be possessed by a coarse and limited capacity, and by one who, with a certain kind of ready talent, has no pretension to genius. But true humour is generally associated with a fine intellect, great delicacy of observation, and a feeling for the pathetic and sublime both in art and nature. Wit includes puns and conundrums, and may take its independent place in Joe Miller Collections or newspaper "Varieties;" but humour has reference to individuals, and is employed in the illustration of points of character. There is as much humour in the delineation of Falstaff as in that of Don Quixote, with the addition of a lavish display of wit.

Cervantes, in the character and achievements of Don Quixote, has contrived with matchless art to give an air of reality to the most hyperbolical descriptions and the most extravagant adventures; and while he ridicules the fantastic follies that have been committed under the banners of Chivalry, he never lets us cease for a moment to love and esteem all that is amiable and noble in connection with it. Shakespeare with kindred skill has compelled us to love what is really loveable in the fat Knight of the Castle, notwithstanding his gluttony, and cowardice, and falsehood.

We must proceed to give a few illustrations of the character of Falstaff. Nothing can be richer in comic flavour than the scene in which he acts the part of the King, and praises himself at the expense of the prince.

"*Falstaff.*—There is a virtuous man, whom I have noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

"*P. Henry.*—What manner of man, an it like your Majesty?

"*Falstaff.*—A good portly man, i'faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r-lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff: if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for Harry, I see virtue in his looks."

There is no point of Falstaff's character more delightful than his surprising readiness and self-possession, which make us forgive or extenuate the lies and rogueries which call upon him so frequently for the utmost exertions of his wit and ingenuity. In the celebrated scene in which "eleven men of buckram grow out of two," when he is called upon to explain how he could distinguish the men in Kendal-green when it was so dark, according to his own account, that he could not see his hand, the reader or auditor is surprised and delighted with the happy equivocation.

"*Poins.*—Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

"*Falstaff.*—What, upon *compulsion?* No; were I at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! if reasons were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason on compulsion."

When the Prince after all the Knight's boasting convicts him of cowardice, and reminds him how he ran and roared for mercy, and inquires—"What trick, what device, what starting hole, canst thou now find out, to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?" he throws his querist quite out again with a most felicitous excuse.

"*Falstaff.*—I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir apparent?"

A similar instance of his instinctive skill in getting out of a scrape, is in the scene in which the hostess in her anger betrays him to the Prince, who, according to Falstaff's assertion, owed him a thousand pounds.

"*P. Henry.*—Thou sayst true, hostess; and he slanders thee most grossly.

"*Hostess.*—So he doth you, my Lord; and said this other day, you ought him a thousand pound.

"*P. Henry.*—Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

"*Falstaff.*—A thousand pound, Hal? a million: thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

"*Hostess.*—Nay, my Lord, he called you Jack, and said he would cudgel you.

"*Falstaff.*—Did I, Bardolph?

"*Bard.*—Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

"*Falstaff.*—Yea; *if* he said, my ring was copper.

"*P. Henry.*—I say, 'tis copper: darest thou be as good as thy word now?

"*Falstaff.*—Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art man, I dare; but, as thou art Prince, I fear thee, as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp."

When the Prince convicts him of speaking ill of him, he excuses himself by saying that he dishonored him before the wicked that the wicked might not fall in love with him.

Another remarkable and most amusing point in Falstaff's character, is the manner in which, with a consciousness of its absurdity, he accuses others of those particular sins and imperfections which are his own most prominent characteristics.

Thus after his affair at Gadshill, he accuses the Prince and others of cowardice—"A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry and amen!" So when he joins in the attack upon the travellers he calls them *gorbellied knaves, fat chuffs, bacons;* and with a reference to his own *youth,* he exclaims, "What knaves? young men must live!" In reply to the reproofs of the Chief Justice, he has the laughable impudence to say, "You that are old, consider not the capacity of *us that are young.*" When asked, if his broken voice amongst other infirmities was not a sufficient indication of old age, he pleasantly surprises us with asserting that he lost it with "singing of anthems."

In the same spirit he utters self-complaints and accuses himself of a melancholy disposition. "A plague," he exclaims, "of sighing and grief! it blows a man up like a bladder!" as if he forgot or wished others to forget, that his size was to be attributed to a very different cause.

Dr. Johnson accuses Falstaff of a malignant disposition, but this appears to be one of the few vices which cannot fairly be laid to his charge. He speaks satirically of others in a style in which idle and witty braggarts generally indulge themselves;

but his perpetual merriment and good humour is inconsistent with so sullen and gloomy a feeling as malignity, which is too nearly allied to spleen and hypochondriasis, for so jovial and sociable a personage as old Jack Falstaff. If he were malignant, he would not be so great a favorite. A malignant man is not fond of joking upon his own foibles and personal appearance, and inviting others to share in the laugh. In truth, he is too fat and indolent to care much for any one. He divides his fellow-creatures into two classes, those who can contribute to his pleasure as boon-companions, and those who not being fond of a good sherris sack are unworthy of a thought. He is really harmless: and is guilty of no very atrocious or revolting crimes, at least none incited by ill-will or hatred towards his fellow-creatures. Amidst all his hostile jokes on the prince, it is clear that he loved him. He swears that the prince must have given him some medicine or love-potion to call up his affections.

Falstaff's exuberance of animal enjoyment and huge rotundity of form are brought into striking contrast with *Justice Shallow,* who is "like a man made after supper with a cheese-paring; and who when he was naked, was for all the world like a forked radish with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife." The Knight has a still more exquisite foil in *Silence,* who "had been merry twice and once ere now."

There is, as we have already observed, as fine a contrast between Sir John Falstaff and Don Quixote, as if they had been drawn by one master-hand. There is also a congeniality of conception in the characters of Falstaff and Sancho Panza, who like Falstaff is of the earth earthy, and who has considerable natural sagacity and vulgar knowledge, though less wit and understanding than the Englishman. They both take a literal view of life and its enjoyments, both are harmless liars, and are both in too good condition to be heroes. Cervantes describing an inn-keeper

takes occasion to intimate that excessive obesity, or as Shakespeare would say, "three fingers on the ribs," is not favorable to courage: the Spanish Boniface alluded to, is said to be "*a man extremely corpulent, and therefore inclined to be peaceable.*"

Sancho and his master are in every respect distinguished from each other, both in mind and body; and even in those points in which some slight resemblance may be traced there is a still stronger dissimilitude than likeness. There is, for instance, great simplicity of character in both; but the rustic simplicity of the squire is as different in quality and degree from the pure-minded simplicity of the Knight, as the simplicity of Roderigo is from that of Othello, the Moor. It is curious to observe how Don Quixote's superior, though warped understanding, and his fine though disordered imagination, at last exercise a complete control over the literal mind of Sancho Panza. With all his shrewdness he is long before he discovers his master's madness, though he is such a frequent eye-witness of his extraordinary mistakes. His master's conversation is so manifestly superior to the suggestions of his own mind, that he is half inclined to distrust the evidences of his senses, and believe the Knight is less mistaken than he appears to be. He makes little doubt of obtaining the government of the island promised by Don Quixote, and comforts himself with this expectation when he is suffering from the clubs of the Yanguesian carriers. The following conversation between Sancho and the woman at the inn, when he and his master put up after the pommelling, is highly characteristic:—

"What is this Cavalier called? quoth the Austurian Maritornes. 'Don Quixote de la Mancha,' answered Sancho Panza, 'he is a knight-errant, and one of the best and most valiant that has been seen this long time in the world.' 'What is a knight-errant?' replied the wench. 'Are you such a novice, that you do not know that?' answered Sancho Panza. 'Then learn, sister of mine, that a knight-errant is a thing that, before you can count two, may be cudgelled and an emperor;—to-day he is the most unfortunate creature in the world, and the most necessitous; and

to-morrow, will have two or three crowns of kingdoms to give to his squire.' 'How comes it then to pass, that you, being squire to this worthy a gentleman,' said the hostess, 'have not yet, as it seems, got so much as an earldom?' 'It is early days yet,' answered Sancho; 'for it is but a month since we set out in quest of adventures, and hitherto we have met with none that deserve the name. And sometimes a man looks for one thing, and finds another. But if my master, Don Quixote, should recover of this wound or fall, and I am not disabled thereby, I would not truck my hopes for the best title in Spain.'"

There is a fine stroke of nature in that passage, in which Sancho is represented as under no alarm as to his own capability of meeting all demands upon his capacity in the office of a Governor, but as being somewhat puzzled about his wife's qualifications to share his dignity.

"'So then,' said Sancho to his master, 'if I were to be a king by any of those miracles you are pleased to mention, Mary Gutierrez, my crooked rib, would at least come to be a queen, and my children infantas?' 'Who doubts it?' said Don Quixote. 'I doubt it,' replied Sancho Panza, 'for I am verily persuaded, that if God were to rain down kingdoms upon the earth, none of them would sit seemly upon the head of Mary Gutierrez; for you must know, Sir, she is not worth two farthings for a queen. The title of Countess, with the help of God and good friends, would sit better upon her.' 'Recommend the matter to Providence, Sancho,' answered Don Quixote, 'and he will do what is best for her: but do thou have a care not to debase thy mind so low, as to content thyself with being less than a lord-lieutenant.' 'Sir, I will not,' answered Sancho, especially having so great a man for my master as your worship, who will know how to give us whatever is most fitting, and what I am best able to bear.' * * * * 'Do you think,' quoth Sancho, 'I should know how to give authority to indignity?' Dignity, thou shouldst say, not indignity,' said his master. 'So let it be,' answered Sancho Panza; 'I dare say, I shall do well enough with it; for I assure your worship I was once beadle of a company, and the beadle's gown became me so well, that every one said, I had a presence fit to be a warden.'"

Sancho had as little notion of the value of military honor as Falstaff, and thought with him that discretion was the better part of valour. He cares less for disgraces than for bruises.

Let us now turn to the pages of the *Spectator*. A higher compliment cannot possibly be paid to the fine genius of Addison than to associate his Sir Roger de Coverley with Falstaff and Don Quixote. It would be preposterous overpraise to compare Addison as a dramatist or as a writer generally with Shakespeare and Cervantes; but the single character of Sir Roger de Coverley would not have been unworthy of any comic writer that the world has yet produced. It exhibits not indeed the fertility of imagination and strength of hand that are displayed in the conception and embodiment of Falstaff and Don Quixote; but it is touched with traits of humour that have never been surpassed in delicacy and truth*. The highest perfection in these respects is not unworthy of being ranked with the different orders of excellence exhibited in the delineations of Shakespeare and Cervantes. There are painters of greater vigour and versatility than Raphael himself, but who do not therefore lead us to undervalue his unrivalled purity and refinement. If Addison had produced a few other characters as exquisite in conception and as highly finished as his Sir Roger de Coverley, his name would probably have stood in the first rank of British genius; but a single fine picture of this nature was not sufficient to rescue him from the comparatively humble station which he occupies as a writer of elegant moral essays and of a play, which, with all its sonorous rhetoric, is singularly deficient in dramatic truth and in the spirit of genuine poetry.

The world would have had little to regret, if Addison's contributions to English Literature had been confined to the papers in the *Spectator* especially devoted to Sir Roger de Coverley, and a few others of a more miscellaneous nature, including the Vision of Mirza and the reflections in Westminster Abbey. But the

* No slight portion of the humour in the character of Falstaff and Don Quixote depends upon his external appearance. It is not so with Sir Roger de Coverley, nor even with Sterne's Uncle Toby.

loss of these would leave an hiatus that could never be filled up by another hand.

The enviable fame of being the intellectual parent of his Roger de Coverley has been disputed on behalf of Sir Richard Steele, on the ground of his having first introduced him in the account of the Club in the second number of the *Spectator*: but we are to recollect, that the notice of him amongst the other members is a mere outline; that it is but fair to conclude that Addison and Steele had sat together in consultation, and exchanged hints and suggestions as to the persons of which the Club was to be composed; and that unquestionably the best and greatest number of papers on the subject of Sir Roger's eccentricities were from the pen of the former, and that he is known to have taken upon himself the charge of preserving a due consistency in the character. It is said that he was so vexed with either Steele or Budgell, (for it is uncertain which wrote the obnoxious paper*) because one of them had made the Knight walk arm and arm with a woman of the town, that he swore with some vehemence that he would himself kill Sir Roger, lest somebody else should murder him.

The first outline of the character is not sketched with Addisonian delicacy, though it is more than probable that the general idea and some of the *leading traits* were suggested by Steele's coadjutor. Mention is made of Sir Roger's bad success with the widow, which is very injudiciously followed up with a hint, which Addison could never have given, that he "grew humble in his desires, and frequently offended in point of chastity with beggars and gypsies." It is also added, that there is such a *mirthful* cast in his behaviour that he is more *beloved* than *esteemed*. This is making almost another Falstaff of him; and Addison, who has so delicately explained the difference between mirth and cheerful-

* It is more probable that the paper was Steele's than Budgell's, as the anecdote is told by Budgell himself, who was not very likely to have mentioned it, if he had written the paper that occasioned Addison's indignation.

ness would never have made his favorite character a man of merriment. In his own papers he has taken care to represent him as something better than a boon companion, and to make him as much respected as beloved. Sir Richard Steele describes the knight as " a gentleman very singular in his behaviour, but whose singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong." But there is assuredly more good sense in complying with the prevalent forms and modes (for it is in these alone that he is singular) than in a solitary endeavour to breast the stream. Addison may be supposed to have expostulated with his friend and coadjutor on these points, for in number 113, which is written by Steele, Sir Roger is represented as a man who is so far from being merry, that he is perpetually haunted by the recollection of his bad success in love, a misfortune which has "*ever since affected his words and actions.*" "I am convinced," continues the writer, "that the widow is the secret cause of all that inconsistency which appears in some parts of my friend's discourse." Addison himself invariably attributes the knight's eccentricities, not to "*good sense,*" but to an unrequited passion for the widow. One cannot help wishing that Addison had kept Sir Roger entirely to himself, and there would then have been no inconsistencies in this most charming portrait. It is but bare justice, however, to remark that the number of the *Spectator*, from which we have just been quoting, is a particularly fine one, and does infinite honor to Sir Richard Steele. If all his papers had been written with the same success, we should not have regretted that Addison had left so much to his hand. But if we object to Steele's touches, we have greatly more reason to object to the supernumerary daubs of Eustace Budgell, " the man that used to call Addison, cousin." In number 116, that person, in total disregard of the character of the Knight, has made him " not scruple to own amongst his most intimate friends," that in order to establish

his reputation as a huntsman, "he has *secretly* sent for a number of foxes out of other counties, which he used to turn loose about the country by night, that he might the better signalize himself in their destruction the next day." Sir Roger was not the man to be up to *secret* and disingenuous tricks of this nature.

Steele in his first paper on Sir Roger very pleasantly represents the Knight as always talking with the servants as he went up stairs, at whatever house he visited; but Addison improves this trait, by making him not merely gossip with them in a style that might render them a little too familiar with him in return, but speak in a tone that indicates a happy mixture of the *father* and the *master*.

Parson Adams*, by Uncle Toby, the Vicar of Wakefield, and Sir Roger de Coverley, are all purely national characters, and a native of England may well be proud that they are by no means exaggerations of English virtue. Proud too may he also be that they are the creations of English genius.

The merit of Addison's humour consists in its utter absence of all caricature. It never borders upon farce. It is often rather hinted than expressed, and more is meant than reaches the ear. He raises a pleasant smile, and conjures up a whole train of characteristic images at a single touch. There is no force of outline —nothing is emphatic or overwrought, and yet all is exquisitely distinct and well defined. He has the art to conceal his art. His happiest strokes appear careless and unpremeditated. Thus vulgar readers are apt to underrate him, because they see no marks of effort. The broad humour of Smollet is more effective with such judges, but if that writer had been called upon for a sketch of Sir Roger, his performance would have resembled the altered picture of the Knight, which an old servant of his had

* Fielding is as superior to Smollet as Cervantes is to LeSage. LeSage and Smollet are painters of manners, and not of universal nature. Their merit, however, in their own line is unequalled.

used as the sign-post to an inn. Sir Roger's modesty thought it too great an honor for any man under a duke to have his head swinging in the wind on a country sign-board, and directed that it should be converted into a Saracen's head. Notwithstanding the exaggerated features, a distant and ludicrous resemblance still remained. Until Addison appeared, humour had always been associated with some taint of indecency. But he has shown us that it stands in no need of such spurious aid. It is a pity that Smollet, Sterne, and Swift, did not follow his example. Goldsmith alone of Addison's successors has equalled him in purity. Addison could bring Sir Roger into an association with the Gypsies, without staining his moral character, and carefully avoids the indecent insinuations of Steele. As a fine specimen of his humour, we shall extract a portion of the account of the interview with those swarthy vagabonds.

"Sir Roger observing that I listened with great attention to his account of a people who were so entirely new to me, told me, that, if I would, they should tell us our fortunes. As I was very well pleased with the knight's proposal, we rid up and communicated our hands to them. A Casandra of the crew, after having examined my lines very diligently, told me, that I loved a pretty maid in a corner, that I was a good woman's man, with some other particulars which I do not think proper to relate. My friend Sir Roger alighted from his horse, and exposing his palm to two or three that stood by him, they crumpled it into all shapes, and diligently scanned every wrinkle that could be made in it; when one of them, who was older and more sun-burnt than the rest, told him, that he had a widow in his line of life. Upon which the knight cried, "Go, go, you are an idle baggage;" and at the same time smiled upon me. The gipsy finding he was not displeased in his heart, told him after farther inquiry into his hand, that his true love was constant, and that she should dream of him to-night. My old friend cried pish, and bid her go on. The gipsy told him that he was a bachelor, but would not be so long; and that he was dearer to somebody than he thought. The knight still repeated, "She was an idle baggage," and bid her go on. "Ah, master," says the gipsy, "that roguish leer of yours makes a pretty woman's heart ache; you have not that simper about the mouth for nothing."—The uncouth gibberish with which all this was uttered, like the darkness of an oracle, made us the more

attentive to it. To be short, the knight left the money with her that he had crossed her hand with, and got up again on his horse.

"As we were riding away, Sir Roger told me, that he knew several sensible people who believed these gipsies now and then foretold very strange things; and for half an hour together appeared more jocund than ordinary. In the height of his good-humour, meeting a common beggar upon the road, who was no conjurer, as he went to relieve him he found his pocket was picked; that being a kind of palmistry at which this race of vermin are very dexterous."

The characteristic description of Sir Roger's behaviour at the play seems to have given Fielding the hint for the amusing criticisms of Partridge. The Knight is perhaps more at home in the parish church, and is equally entertaining and delightful.

"As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees any body else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing of the Psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when every body else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

"I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see any thing ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities."

In Sir Roger's manners and remarks at Westminster Abbey, we observe that Addison allows him just sufficient sense to set off his excessive simplicity. His inviting the interpreter to call upon him at his house, and talk over the subject of his explana-

tions, is an exquisite stroke of humour, and shows at a glance the singleness of heart and ignorance of the world which are amongst his leading characteristics.

"I must not omit, that the benevolence of my good old friend, which flows out towards every one he converses with, made him very kind to our interpreter, whom he looked upon as an extraordinary man; for which reason he shook him by the hand at parting, telling him, that he should be very glad to see him at his lodgings in Norfolk-buildings, and talk over these matters with him more at leisure."

Let us turn from Sir Roger de Coverley to a kindred spirit—Sterne's Uncle Toby, who has as much simplicity as Sancho Panza himself, but with an infinitely finer nature. There seems to be in all humour a principle of strong contrast, which causes a painter of manners to throw in his points of opposition as freely as an artist distributes his light and shade upon the canvas. The fat and mirthful Falstaff has his foils in Silence and Justice Shallows. The spare knight of La Mancha is set off to advantage by the proximity of Sancho. Sir Roger de Coverley's pleasant sense of his own importance in his county, his cheerful garrulity and his busy benevolence are well opposed to the silence and sensitive modesty of his friend the *Spectator*; and nothing can be more humorously at variance than the restless and speculative spirit of Mr. Shandy, and the imperturbable temper of my uncle Toby. The calm simplicity with which my uncle confounds his metaphysical brother, with some reply to his fine spun speculations, as far from the point as Falstaff's replies to the Chief Justice, when the knight affected deafness, and which drives the irritable Mr. Shandy into a state of discomfort and confusion that makes him bite his lips with vexation, is inexpressibly diverting. But exquisite as is the humour displayed in the delineation of my uncle Toby's character, it is not the point of the picture that is the most precious. It is his unaffected goodness of nature that leaves the strongest impression on the mind amidst all his amusing eccentricities. His courage and gentleness, his unconscious su-

periority to all mankind in purity and tenderness of heart, and his unboastful patience under suffering, are the qualities that so endear him to the reader. It has been well said, that his character is a compliment to human nature. Had his head been equal to his heart, he would have been almost like a god; but it is by no means certain that we should have loved him better. He is the very personification of benevolence. He has not the heart to retaliate upon a fly. " 'Go,' says he, one day at dinner to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner time," (no small trial of the temper!) "and, which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last;—'I'll not hurt a hair of thy head: 'Go,' says he, lifting up the sash, and opening his hand as he spoke, to let it escape;—'Go, poor devil, get thee gone, why should I hurt thee? *This world is surely wide enough to hold both thee and me.*' " Undoubtedly, this is in the finest spirit of christianity.

Doctor Johnson used to say, that no one would eat a slice of plumb-pudding the less on account of the death or affliction of his dearest friend. Let us see how my uncle Toby receives the statement of the distress of a perfect stranger. This passage occurs in the most pathetic episode that was ever written, the story of Le Fevre.

"Has he a son with him, then? said my uncle Toby.—A boy, replied the landlord, of about eleven or twelve years of age; but the poor creature has tasted almost as little as his father; he does nothing but mourn and lament for him night and day. He has not stirred from the bed-side these two days.

"My uncle Toby *laid down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate from before him, as the landlord gave him the account; and Trim, without being ordered, took away,* without saying one word, and, in a few minutes after, brought him his pipe and tobacco."

So again, when Corporal Trim gives an account of the attention of the poor son of Le Fevre to his dying father, how exquisitely true is the feeling which prompted my uncle Toby with

a wish that he were asleep. No ordinary author would have hit upon so delicate a touch of nature.

"I wish, said my uncle Toby, with a deep sigh—I wish, Trim, I was asleep.—

"Your honour, replied the Corporal, is too much concerned. Shall I pour your honour out a glass of sack to your pipe?—Do, Trim, said my uncle Toby."

How finely is the humanity of my uncle distinguished from that of Mr. Shandy and his brother.

"Nature is nature, said Jonathan.——And that is the reason, cried Susannah, I so much pity my mistress.—She will never get the better of it.——Now I pity the Captain the most of any one in the family, answered Trim.—Madam will get ease of heart in weeping,—and *the Squire in talking about it,—but my poor Master will keep it all in silence to himself.*—I shall hear him sigh in his bed for a whole month together, as he did for Lieutenant Le Fevre. An' please your Honour, do not sigh so piteously, I would say to him as I lay beside him.—I cannot help it, Trim, my Master would say;—'tis so melancholy an accident,—I cannot get it off my heart.——Your Honour fears not death yourself.——I hope, Trim, I fear nothing, he would say, but the doing a wrong thing.—Well, he would add, whatever besides, I will take care of Le Fevre's boy.—And with that, like a quieting draught, his Honour would fall asleep."

My Uncle Toby cannot even curse the father of all evil:—

"I declare, quoth my uncle Toby, my heart would not let me curse the Devil himself with so much bitterness.——He is the father of curses, replied Dr. Slop.——So am not I, replied my uncle.——But he is cursed and damn'd already, to all eternity, replied Dr. Slop.

"I am sorry for it, quoth my uncle Toby.

"Dr. Slop drew up his mouth, and was just beginning to return my uncle Toby the compliment of his Whu—u—u—, or interjectional whistle, —when the door hastily opening in the next chapter but one,—put an end to the affair."

Trim is a kind of Sancho Panza to this gentle Quixote, but as much surpasses his brother squire in the qualities of the heart as his master surpasses the knight of La Mancha, who was nevertheless by no means ordinarily gifted as a man of virtue. The two masters are equally desirous to make their servants com-

fortable; but, it is curious to observe, that Don Quixote is unable to suppress a reference to his position as a gentleman, while my uncle Toby thinks exclusively of the convenience of his faithful adherent. Both servants are disposed to decline availing themselves of their master's kindness, Trim from pure respect, and Sancho Panza with characteristic selfishness and vulgar cunning, because, he thinks he shall enjoy himself better in taking his meals alone :—

"My uncle Toby was one evening getting his supper, with Trim sitting behind him at a small sideboard,—I say, sitting,—for, in consideration of the Corporal's lame knee (which sometimes gave him exquisite pain) when my uncle Toby dined or supped alone, he would never suffer the Corporal to stand; and the poor fellow's veneration for his master was such, that, with a proper artillery, my uncle Toby could have taken Dendermond itself, with less trouble than he was able to gain this point over him; *for many a time when my uncle Toby supposed the Corporal's leg was at rest, he would look back, and detect him standing behind him with the most dutiful respect.*—This bred more little squabbles betwixt them, than all other causes for five-and-twenty years together."

Let us contrast the above with the account of Don Quixote's condescension to his squire in the goatherd's hut. Perhaps in a finer dwelling and in a finer company he would have been less obliging :—

"The knight sat down, and Sancho remained standing to serve the cup, which was of horn. His master, seeing him thus stationed, said to him: 'That you may see, Sancho, the intrinsic worth of knight-errantry, and how fair a prospect its meanest retainers have of speedily gaining the respect and esteem of the world, my will is, that you sit here by my side, and in company with these good folks, and that you be one and the same thing with me, who am your master and natural lord; that you eat from off my plate, and drink of the same cup in which I drink: for the same may be said of knight-errantry, which is said of love, that it makes all things equal.' 'I give you my most hearty thanks, sir,' said Sancho; 'but let me tell your worship, that, provided I have victuals enough, I can eat as well, or better, standing, and alone by myself, than if I were seated close by an emperor. And farther, to tell you the truth, what I eat in my corner, without compliments or ceremonies, though it were nothing but bread and an onion, relishes better than turkeys at other folks' tables, where I am forced to chew leisurely, drink little, wipe my mouth often,

neither sneeze nor cough when I have a mind, nor do other things, which I may do being alone and at liberty. So that, good sir, as to these honours your worship is pleased to confer upon me, as a menial servant, and hanger-on of knight-errantry, being squire to your worship, be pleased to convert them into something of more use and profit to me; for, though I place them to account, as received in full, I renounce them from this time forward to the end of the world.'"

The humour and pathos of Sterne are too well known and too highly appreciated to require the aid of criticism to enforce his merit.

SONNET—NATURE.

The breezy cliff, the softly-swelling hill,
The quiet valley, and the cheerful plain,
The calm romantic lake, the rolling main,
Are now my haunts! Their varied graces fill
My soul with pleasant dreams, and soothe and still
The passions' strife, and fever of the brain.—
Oh! how resistless thy mysterious reign,
Benignant Nature! O'er the sense of ill
Thy smiles have holy power! When the proud glow
Of wild ambition fades, and the world's brow
Grows stern and dark, thy lone but fair domain
Is Sorrow's sweetest home. There cold disdain
Ne'er wakes the tear of unregarded woe,
Nor sickening envy dreads a rival's gain.

THE LADY TO HER BIRD*.

I.

GAY minstrel-bird! Those prison bars
Ne'er check thy song, nor chill thy breast;
Thy bliss no sad remembrance mars,
No wildering visions haunt thy rest.
The past's soft hue, the future's veil,
With vain regrets and idle fears
Ne'er make thy merriest music fail,
Nor dim thine eye with tears.

II.

Alas! a darker doom is mine,
A dower 'tis well thou dost not share:
For human hearts alone repine
At pleasures past or coming care;
And if perchance a moment's pain
Thy little panting breast may thrill,
Thou dost not feed the transient bane
With some fantastic ill.

III.

Sweet bird! The gift of one who gave
A dearer boon,—his own true heart,
I fain a sadder song would crave
If thou couldst mimic sorrow's part;

*These verses were written to illustrate an engraving in the Bengal Annual.

But as the rose with bright tints dyed
To summer's rule alone belongs,
So thou to kindred fate allied
Can'st breathe but summer songs.

Yet oh! when he who charmed this breast
Is far away—what sound is sweet?
And earth in wintry gloom is drest
When I no more his smile may meet.
On thee, his living gift, I gaze—
My hand his golden token bears—
While he o'er unknown regions strays,
And unknown danger dares.

V.

In vain I seize the lute he loved,
In vain his favorite airs would try,
The songs that once but softly moved
My heart, now wake too wild a sigh;
And lighter strains but mock the mind
Intently turned on happier hours;—
The sad no charm in mirth can find,
And kindred grief o'erpowers.

TO A LADY ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

I WILL not hail thy natal day
With custom's cold unmeaning words ;
The hopes and fears that haunt thy way
My fond heart silently records.

I will not wish its glad return,
With lifted bowl and hacknied phrase ;
Thy breast for better meed would yearn
Than idle forms and fulsome praise.

Thou knowest that in my secret soul
Thine hallowed image, aye must dwell ;
And faithful passion's strong controul
In vain the feeble tongue would tell.

If then amidst the formal crowd
I fail to breathe the formal prayer,
A fervid love more deep than loud
Thine heart will not disdain to share.

When thou no more deceit canst brook,
And fain the lines of truth wouldst trace,
Dear Lady ! watch thy lover's look,
And read the language of his face !

MINIATURE OUTLINES.

NO. I.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Bulwer maintains, that Scott is greater as a poet than as a novelist. There cannot be many converts to this very singular creed. Scott was without all question the greatest Romance writer of his time, but he was far behind many of his contemporaries in poetical genius. The sun of Byron had scarcely risen above the horizon before the lesser light of Scott grew dim in the eyes of all men. The noble poet greatly surpassed him even in the vulgar art of obtaining a certain kind of popularity amongst unpoetical readers by melodramatic tales in metre, which are so often greedily devoured by persons who are utterly blind or indifferent to the poetical beauties, by which they may be illustrated or accompanied. Neither Scott nor Byron were remarkable for the higher poetical endowments which are most appreciated by those, who care little for that part of the machinery of a poem which could be transferred without essential injury to a prose fiction; but assuredly the noble bard exhibited a larger share of these qualities in his writings than Sir Walter. If we were to take away from any one of the latter's poems the mere story, it would be bare indeed. A few vivid descriptions would still remain, but even these are little better than mere transcripts—they have more of the accuracy of detail than the glow of imagination. There is a want of thought as well as of imagination in Scott's poetry, and this is the reason that it is so rarely quoted. His diction is prosaic and commonplace. His words never glitter with the dews of Castalie. No poet ever wrote so much and obtained such extensive popularity, with

so little permanent effect upon his native language. Wordsworth, who is still an unpopular poet, has yet rendered many of his admirable lines familiar as household words. They have become so blended with the language, and the thoughts also, of our best public writers, that they are often repeated by persons who never opened a volume of his works. With respect even to the personages of Scott's Romances in metre, there is not one that has made any lasting impression upon the public mind. They are not psychological portraits, but rude though characteristic sketches of certain picturesque and romantic looking beings of a picturesque and romantic country and period. The poet has done little more than versify the ancient annals of his own land, and when he has left his old worm-eaten prose materials, he has fallen into the error of raising up associations that are incongruous with his subject. He jumbles old things with new. His style is the modern antique. His manner and his matter are often in startling contrast. No poet of half his eminence and real merit, has resorted so liberally to the use of the vulgar clap-traps and little arts of ordinary poetasters. Sir Walter Scott's mind was not essentially poetical, and we see this not only in his writings but in his life. But that he had great powers of some kind or other, does not admit of a moment's question. His faculties were too vigorous, and his judgment too sound to have suffered him to fail egregiously in any task that he might choose to undertake, however much opposed to his natural bent. His metrical Romances, therefore, though in many respects defective, considered in the light of mere poems, were successful as far as immediate sale and a temporary popularity were the desired objects, because there was a charm in the antiquity-grown-new-again of his subjects, and there was spirit and vigour in the execution; but no man who has carefully watched the progress of the literature of the present day, can pretend that Scott's writings in verse have not ceased to be the favorites even of the mob of readers. He never

was a poet's poet, and never will be; and he himself, with that self-knowledge which is always indicative of a superior understanding, has on more than one occasion expressed his firm conviction, that his poetry did not owe its transient popularity to any great intrinsic excellence, or to any quality that was likely to secure it a long existence. A true poet would never have had this misgiving. Wordsworth has preserved unimpaired the strong consciousness of poetical genius through evil and through good report, and feels that he can calmly await his time. He has realized Dr. Johnson's finely expressed conception respecting the quiet confidence of Milton. "Fancy," (says the most eloquent and interesting of the biographers of our poets, though not *always* their best critic,) "can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation, stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own consciousness, and waiting without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion and the impartiality of a future generation."

Sir Walter Scott's real strength lay in the line to which he eventually adhered—*the prose romance*. He was here unrivalled. Nothing in ancient or modern literature is to be compared to his exquisite prose fictions, considered as romances. Fielding was a greater *novelist*—a profounder artist. His *Tom Jones* is a prose epic, and all his novels show that he had a far deeper insight into human character than Sir Walter Scott; but his successor is infinitely more picturesque in his descriptions, and has more genuine pathos, and exhibits a far greater delicacy of mind. The purest hearted readers find nothing to disgust them in the pages of Scott, but there is a coarseness and worldliness in Fielding, and a turn for low and licentious excitement that almost justifies Richardson's bitter sarcasm, that he writes as if he had

been bred in a stable-yard, though it was mean and indelicate in the author of *Sir Charles Grandison* to insult Fielding's sister with such an observation. Perhaps Fielding's most indecent scenes are not more offensive to a pure imagination than Richardson's own account of Pamela's escapes from her master's persecution, and the cool calculating spirit in which she made so advantageous a bargain for the surrender of her person. The most just and discriminate criticism that has yet been published upon the literary character of Sir Walter Scott, is beyond all comparison the critique on Lockhart's book in the *Westminster Review* by Thomas Carlyle*. Such a truly philosophical analysis of a writer's genius

* Mr. Carlyle's popularity in America has been particularly spoken of by Miss Martineau, who is one of his warmest admirers. It is difficult to understand how Mr. Carlyle should be a *popular* writer in any country, especially in America, where the people are supposed to be so fond of the plain and practical in all things. His style, one would imagine, must be as *caviare* to the multitude in America as it undoubtedly is in England. The most eminent of our critics at home, are in the habit of speaking of him as the profoundest thinker of his time, but for the people in general he has few attractions. He goes as far beyond the general apprehension in prose as Wordsworth does in verse. The greatest poet of the day is any thing but *popular*, and perhaps never will be; but that his *fame* is rapidly spreading, is beyond a doubt. It is the same with Carlyle; he is unpopular, but he has made a deep and permanent impression upon a fit audience though few. Mere popularity is a most equivocal test of genius. Hayley was once a popular poet, and so was Darwin, and so was Dryden's rival, the miserable Settle. Scott was the best Romance writer of his day, and undoubtedly exhibited some genius, even as a poet; but what was that genius compared to the genius of a Wordsworth, a Coleridge and a Shelley? And yet he sold nearly 50,000 copies of each of his poems, when the glorious trio alluded to, found it difficult to dispose of a single small edition of works, whose influence is daily increasing in the same ratio as the poetry of Scott is passing into disrepute. Scott's poems will be, of course, known to a remote posterity, because they are linked to his immortal prose romances, but it will be a juxta-position of the dead with the living.

It is pleasant to find that real merit always forces its way at last into the notice it deserves, and however mad and blind the people appear at intervals, they always settle into right opinions in the end. Mr. Carlyle, whose singular style is undoubtedly one of the obstacles to his immediate success, is evidently beginning to make his way with the general reader. This strange obscurity of style is the more to be regretted, because it is a veil that hides much real beauty of thought and sentiment. Behind this cloud is the light of a noble intellect.

is rare in these days, when periodical criticism is, (speaking generally,) so shallow or so partial, is so much the mere echo of vulgar opinion, or so much the suggestion of party spirit or personal prejudice, that readers of any sagacity have ceased to place the slightest confidence in its decisions.

Amongst others, Mr. Atherstone, the author of "Nineveh," has designated his countryman, the Scottish Shakespeare. One is almost tempted on occasions of this nature to imitate the sarcasm of Coleridge, who on being told, that Klopstock was styled the German Milton, exclaimed, "a *very German* Milton indeed!" The Scotch are too fond of these inconsiderate and injudicious comparisons. They call Joanna Baillie, the Female Shakespeare. She is undoubtedly a truly admirable writer, but not a Shakespeare! Shakespeares are not quite so common. Nature has not produced such a miracle of genius in every age nor in every country. It is doing a positive injury to the reputation of any modern writer to compare him with the mighty prince of Dramatists; and no one would have been more sensible of the vast inequality of genius between the author of Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet and Othello, and the writer of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, Marmion, the Lady of the Lake, and the celebrated Scottish prose romances, than Walter Scott himself. He would have been unaffectedly shocked at such critical blasphemy. His

Mr. Carlyle's first publication was a "Life of Schiller." That work is written in a pure and easy style, and though full of the philosophical thought and subtle criticism, which characterize all his writings, it has nothing in the mere composition that would lead any one to associate it with his later works, in which he seems to be getting more and more remarkable in his manner in proportion to the notice that he is attracting. He seems desirous that we shall not gain his sweets of sentiment and fancy at too easy a rate. We must study him. He is not satisfied with making his matter original, but is determined to surprise us with his manner also. It must be acknowledged that as we get more familiar with his style we discover merits in it that are in keeping with the peculiarity of the thoughts, and that a certain freshness and point is thus given them which might be lost in some degree if they were conveyed in a different form. The style would be very unfit for a feeble and commonplace writer.

sound and modest mind had taken a just measure of its own powers. I cannot imagine any thing more honorably characteristic of his frank and manly spirit than his lively sense of the higher poetical genius of many of his contemporaries, at a time too when his own popularity was quite unrivalled. His own estimate of his poetical powers some twenty years ago, was a most prophetic anticipation of the general judgment of the present day. No critic who pretends to any discrimination and *who is wholly unbiassed by national partialities*, would now pretend for a moment to consider him the equal in *poetical* genius of William Wordsworth, of Shelley, or of Coleridge. Those of his countrymen who hold him up as a Scottish Shakespeare do not say much for Scottish genius. The English never expect, perhaps never hope, for a greater poet than their immortal dramatist, and they may well be contented with such a specimen of their national genius. But if our Northern neighbours are satisfied with Walter Scott, and think their country can never produce a greater poet, they do but little justice to their own nature. Robert Burns, *as a poet*, is infinitely superior to Walter Scott. Compared to the strong lines of the Ayrshire ploughman, the Baronet's octosyllabics are absolute namby-pamby. The former was a true poet, and as one illustration of the genuineness of his genius, it is only necessary to observe, that his productions have so deeply entered into the hearts and minds of men, that many of his "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" are as familiar to us as the common air. But Scott's poetry is rarely quoted and still more rarely remembered. He has many fresh and vivid descriptions in easy and flowing verse, but he has no intensity of passion or profundity of thought. To speak as a phrenologist, he is deficient in the organ of *ideality*. He interests us in a rapid narrative, but we feel not the spiritual presence of the Muse, and we meet with no words steeped in Castalian dews, and colored like

"The golden exhalations of the dawn."

When his admirers point to his best passages, we see nothing but lively details:—no gleams of that "light which never was by sea or land"—no "thoughts that lie too deep for tears"—none of those sudden glimpses of our secret and most spiritual nature which flash upon the inward eye, and which when once reflected on the poet's page must live for ever. If it would be blind madness to compare the moss troopers of Scott with the wondrous creations of Shakespeare, it would be almost equally absurd and rash to bring his thoughts or his diction into a comparison with many of the glorious lines of Wordsworth and Coleridge, that have a charm for every mind that has a sense of harmony and beauty, and which will shine for ever in "Orient hues unborrowed of the sun." With respect to Scott's prose romances, they are undoubtedly the only true foundation of his fame. The Scotch may well be proud of their countrymen as a writer of prose fiction. When he attempted history, as in his Life of Napoleon; or criticism, as in his editions of Dryden and Swift, he was an ordinary author, and had many superiors. It was as the magician, who at a single stroke of his wand separated the thick curtain of the past, and showed his countrymen their remote ancestors in their antique garments, that his powers were seen to their best advantage. He was great in fiction and in narrative, but he was not great as a thinker. The characters in his Romances are most admirable outlines, and exhibit the most faithful traits of a particular age or country; but they are not to be compared for an instant, with the psychological delineations in the pages of the prince of Dramatic poets. Shakespeare entered the innermost regions of the general heart, and his representations of nature are not applicable to one age or country alone, but to all times and to the human race.

NO. II.—HAZLITT AND COBBETT.

This may be thought at first sight an odd juxta-position of names, and yet there are some points of resemblance as well as of opposition between these celebrated men. I am not sure that Cobbett would feel flattered by the connection of his name with Hazlitt's*. The editor of the "Register" must naturally entertain a sovereign contempt for many of Hazlitt's passionate sympathies and profound abstractions. It is only in their controversial politics that they at all assimilate. No writers of these times have displayed greater spirit and dexterity in disarming their opponents, and in scattering their cobweb sophistries to the winds. They are both violent and pugnacious, but there is something truly English in the daring manner in which they avow and support their hostility. Neither of them stab in the dark. If they fight hard, they do not use the Italian stiletto. They hide no deadly weapon under a bravo's cloak, nor wear a mask upon their faces.

It is perhaps difficult to decide whether Hazlitt or Cobbett be most powerful as a party controversialist. No man grapples with his enemy or with a particular question with such a close and mortal vehemence as Cobbett; but in large and liberal views he is greatly surpassed, not only by Hazlitt, but by many other writers on the same side. He never troubles himself with the abstract philosophy of politics, but applies himself to a direct and practical consideration of some immediate object. In doing this he addresses himself so entirely to the common sense of mankind, with such an air of downright sincerity and in a style so colloquial, clear, forcible and unaffected, that he is sure to command the attention of his readers. It is rarely, indeed, that he is opposed to the stream of popular opinion, and the people are delighted to find their favorite notions explained and defended in their own unsophisticated way, but with a voice of more power and effect.

* This article (with the exception of one or two paragraphs) was written in the life-time of these authors.

In this lies the secret of Cobbett's extraordinary success. He enforces and confirms all the national prejudices of his countrymen. His words come home at once to their business and bosoms. His capacity does not differ from that of ordinary people in kind, but in degree. It is of the same character, but of greater force; it is a concentration of the popular mind. Hazlitt, on the other hand, with less rude vigour and bull-dog ferocity, displays a wider range of thought and a more subtle logic. As all men are not metaphysicians and profound thinkers, the effect of Hazlitt's writings is neither so extensive nor so immediate as that of Cobbett's. They exercise, however, a deeper influence over superior minds, and are calculated to make a more lasting impression. The Essays of William Hazlitt will be recurred to for instruction and entertainment when the Political Register is forgotten; because the former teem with general truths and first principles, while the latter owes its attraction to party prejudices and temporary details. Cobbett is never quoted as an authority, and has none of those sentences pregnant with thought or felicitous in expression which linger on the reader's memory, and at last form a portion of his own mind. As a partisan, however, Cobbett is perhaps more effective than Hazlitt, because the latter is apt to lose sight of some immediate interest or narrow controversy, and to run off into speculations too deep or delicate for the comprehension of the multitude.

But though Cobbett is not a profound writer, it is impossible to read his productions, let the subject be what it may, without being struck with the force and perspicuity of the style. There is no dainty choice of uncommon phrases, no squeamish avoidance of natural images and naked truths, but a manly simplicity and directness that comes home to the reader's comprehension with a far greater effect than is attained by the finest rhetorical periods of more fastidious writers. His English is not only more racy, but more correct, than that of Swift himself; and all his compositions

display the native vigour of our language to the greatest possible advantage. To suppose that his style is a vulgar style, is a great error. That he is guilty of occasional vulgarisms of thought, and that his mode of treating an opponent is sometimes unmannerly, I do not deny; but in speaking of his style I confine myself to the composition alone. Let a reader of discrimination compare a number of the *Register* (kept up with such extraordinary spirit for nearly thirty years) with the "sound and fury, signifying nothing," of a paper in the *Rambler*. He will see how clear and pithy is the one, and how vague and empty is the other. And yet there are persons whose taste is too delicate for the genuine English of Cobbett, who look upon the *Rambler* as a model of fine writing. I would not, however, speak disrespectfully of Dr. Johnson; for though the *Rambler* is written in a vicious style, it was not his best production. His *Lives of the Poets* shew that he could embody manly thoughts in lucid and impressive language: and nothing can surpass in clearness and acuteness his ordinary conversation as recorded by Boswell. Cobbett's intellect, though powerful and masculine, is not of a very high order. In this respect he cannot be compared for a moment either with Johnson or with Swift. He has neither depth nor elevation. But though his mind is neither profound nor imaginative; though he can neither dive nor soar; he walks with unrivalled ease and strength on the plain ground of common sense. He is never dull, and never feeble; and young ambitious writers, who are apt to aim at stirring the minds of their readers with gaudy epithets and laboriously rounded sentences, should have their attention called to the powerful effect which Cobbett produces by the simplest means. When a writer seems himself perplexed, and is observed to labour, the reader always partakes largely of his pain and weariness. There are no qualities of good writing so well fitted to keep up the reader's attention, as an unaffected perspicuity and an easy vigour. He who doubts this, should take up a

number of Cobbett's *Register*, when his eyes are just closing over some laboured composition, in which every sentence has received its highest polish, and he will feel like a man who leaves his lamp-lit study for the fresh morning air*.

Cobbett, though in some respects different from all other English writers, is yet so intensely national, that I question whether he could be fairly appreciated in any other country than his own.

Hazlitt, as a politician, may be associated with several other writers, though he has not many equals; and his essays on books, and men and manners, are in the same class as those of his friends Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt. With less grace of manner than those writers, he has more energy and ardour.

Hazlitt is rather short in stature, and from extreme shyness and too much sensibility, has always an awkward air in mixed company. His eyes were originally dark, clear, and full; but time and care have made them rather dim and filmy, except under a strong momentary excitement. They have also a wild unsettled look, and indicate great activity of thought and a state of internal restlessness. You see at a glance that he is not the sort of man who would remain contented with ancient common-places and mere conventionalisms. If the attention of the company is too much directed towards him to allow of his indulging in his own subtle and original abstractions, he seems quite

* The following is taken from Northcote's Conversations:—"*Northcote*—But you have a vast opinion of Cobbett too, haven't you? Oh! he's a giant! He has such prodigious strength; he tears up a subject by the roots. Did you ever read his Grammar? Or see his attack on Mrs. ———? It was like a hawk pouncing on a wren. I should be terribly afraid to get into his hands. And then his homely, familiar way of writing—it is not from necessity or vulgarity, but to show his contempt for aristocratic pride and arrogance. He has a kitchen-garden only; he could have a flower-garden too if he chose. Peter Pindar said his style was like the Horse-Guards, only one story above the ground, while Junius's had all the airy elegance of Whitehall; but he could raise his style just as high as he pleased; though he does not want to sacrifice strength to elegance. He knows better what he is about."

distressed, and turns an uneasy look towards the door, as if meditating the means of an abrupt escape. This is only the case, however, amongst strangers, or in a large party. His forehead is high and broad, but the lower part of his face is less intellectual than the upper. His mouth has almost a sensual expression, and the motion of his lips is tremulous and indecisive. Perhaps this may be thought to correspond with the extreme inequality of his writings, his love of paradox, and his disposition to oppose and balance the most delicate speculations on matters that the world in general have long thought settled beyond a doubt. His conversation with familiar friends, and with those who he thinks will understand him, always teems with original thoughts and fancies, alternately sparkling and profound ; but he seems to labour with his meaning, and his delivery is occasionally impeded by a sudden pause, as if he were at a loss for words. The strength and beauty of his thoughts, however, when once delivered, make ample amends for the slowness and difficulty of their birth.

NO. III.—THOMAS CAMPBELL.

There was published some time ago, in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, an interesting literary curiosity in the form of a letter from Mr. Campbell to Sir John Sinclair, who had urged him to dramatize a given subject. The poet's modesty and good sense in declining the attempt, cannot be too much admired, when it is remembered, that of all knowledge, the knowledge of our own powers is of the rarest attainment. Though the most condensed, the most nervous, and the most polished of our living poets, his Muse is deficient in dramatic power ; and, like most of our modern bards, he can better describe his own feelings than the feelings of other men. His manner is altogether too concise, too antithetical, and too formal, to be adapted to every variety of passion and of

humour. His style is classically, and even fastidiously correct, and it may perhaps be objected to it, that it has too much the appearance of being constructed on some particular model, from which he has made up his mind that it would be an unpardonable sin to deviate, even in the breadth of a hair. Thus, with all his energy and fire, his Pegasus is a checked steed, and prances in a given track. It is something like an illustration of this argument, that Mr. Campbell has very rarely ventured to divest himself of the silken fetters of rhyme. The variety, the majesty, the glorious freedom of blank-verse, which is the boast of English poetry, and which, as Southey has well said, is the noblest measure of which our language is capable, seems to have presented him with a field too open and unbounded. He prefers the narrow and more beaten road, and it must be confessed that never did a more graceful and spirited personage condescend to travel on the common causeway. It is nevertheless to be regretted, that a writer who has given evidence of so much strength and animation should have thus restrained his energies by over-caution. If he had only given way somewhat more freely to his own impulses, he would have been a much greater poet.

In person, Campbell is eminently handsome and genteel, but is perhaps a little lower in stature than is quite consistent with dignity. It is strange, as it has often been remarked, how many *great* men have been *little* men. Gray uses these expressions, but in a very different sense.

"How low, how *little* are the *great!*"

Campbell is not so short, I believe, as Thomas Moore. George the Fourth, in a fit of playfulness, once threatened to put the latter into a wine-cooler,—a joke which the poet, it is said, did not entirely relish, though it fell from royal lips, before he had quarrelled with kings and princes, or had recorded his anger in immortal verse. Leigh Hunt's account of Campbell is to the life. "His face and person," says he, "are rather on a small scale; his fea-

tures regular; his eye lively and penetrating; and when he speaks, dimples play about his mouth, which nevertheless has something restrained and close in it." To a stranger at first sight there is an air of primness and fastidiousness in his look and manner, but this soon wears off, and as he grows more familiar his fine expressive eye becomes full of noble meanings, and you soon discover both the poet and the patriot. It is in a tête a tête, or in a very small and select party of friends, that he appears to most advantage. In a large company he is too guarded, and betrays a consciousness of authorship and celebrity.

I once overheard a young barrister exclaim in a whisper, "What! is that little man the author of Hohenlinden and the Battle of the Baltic!" Unlike the authors of the last age, Campbell is rather spruce in his dress. Slovenliness is no longer esteemed a sign of scholarship. Bulwer is almost as great a dandy as Beau Brummel—so is D'Israeli the younger—so is Mr. Carne—so also is Mr. Emerson, the author of Letters from Greece; and many other literary men of genius and celebrity. Thomas Moore is as neat and particular in the cut of his clothes as in the turn of his verses. As the fashion in this respect has changed, perhaps the majority of authors will soon cease to give the world an opportunity of repeating Aristotle's rebuke of Antisthenes, "We see your vanity through your thread-bare cloak." I believe that pedants and men of letters are sometimes negligent of their externals, from a supposition that the extent of their learning or the greatness of their genius renders them independent of the ordinary marks of respectability. Hazlitt, who is himself a sloven, has said that poets, artists, and men of genius in general, are seldom coxcombs, but often slovens; for they find something better worth studying than their persons. The strong desire, however, of attracting the notice of others that seems inherent in the breasts of most authors and artists, does not necessarily stop at the result of their labours. They do not always like to disappoint by their personal appearance

the interest excited by their works. Hazlitt himself has somewhere called Leigh Hunt an agreeable coxcomb, and Lord Byron a sublime one. He has also admitted (I forget where or when) that Sir Philip Sidney, Vandyke, and Raffaelle were "coxcombs." Cæsar was a fop. Perhaps men of true and great genius are very rarely absolute slovens. Milton, Shakespeare, Bacon, and Bounaparte, were neither. They hit the happy medium between the two extremes of coxcombry and slovenliness.

But I am departing from my subject:—Campbell betrays a leaning to that school of poetry to which Wordsworth is so hostile; and nothing can be more opposite than the styles of these two contemporaries. Campbell has written little, but that little will live; the world would not willingly let it die. Wordsworth, though a more philosophical poet, and of a far higher rank, cannot possibly travel through the rough road of futurity without leaving behind him a considerable mass of lumber. If Campbell is too timid and precise, Wordsworth is too egotistical and verbose. The former is too cautious, and the latter too careless. Campbell is a more equal, but a less ambitious poet. He performs all that he attempts, but does not attempt so much. Campbell has pursued the safest, but not the most glorious route to posterity. Wordsworth is a bolder traveller, and has aimed at nobler acquisitions with the chance of greater failures, and at the risk of being encumbered with much unwieldy wealth.

Campbell with all his fame is still a timid author, and is as much frightened at his own reputation as a child at its own shadow. He is always afraid that his new productions will not come up to the expectations of the public. It is said that he was deeply hurt at the comparatively indifferent success of his *Theodric*, notwithstanding the kind and generous notice which it received from his friend Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*. Lord Byron, in speaking of Campbell's probable vexation at Coleridge's having attacked the "Pleasures of Hope," in a public lecture on Poetry,

observed that Campbell was the most sensitive man in such matters that he had ever met with. "And yet what," added his Lordship, "has *he* to fear from criticism?" Some one, to please Campbell, was questioning, with an air of indignation, the force or justice of Hazlitt's strictures upon his poetry; but Campbell replied with a faint smile and an uneasy look, that there was often but too much truth in them. He perhaps never entirely forgave the critic; and when he inserted in the *New Monthly Magazine* an eloquent memoir of that writer after his death, he appended an ungracious note to the article, protesting against the high opinion expressed by his contributor of Mr. Hazlitt's critical subtlety and fine taste. This was unworthy of Campbell, who is generally distinguished for his candour and generosity*. He has his faults; but still he is noble-minded, and is no doubt the first to discover his errors and to feel how much they are beneath him. He once quoted in the course of conversation a couplet from his own *Theodric* which might be applied to himself.

"How oft the wisest on misfortune's shelves
Are wrecked by errors most unlike themselves."

Though Hazlitt has written some of the severest, he has also written some of the most favorable criticisms that have ever appeared upon the poetry of Campbell. He pronounced his "Battle of Hohenlinden" the most lyrical in sound and spirit of any ode in the language. I suppose, when he said this, he did not think of Dryden's Alexander's Feast, to which it is certainly inferior in variety and power. Indeed it is not equal to the odes

* The *Westminster Review* for April, in an extremely clever but rather ill-natured article on Martin's Illustrations of the Bible, pays Hazlitt a handsome compliment. "Hazlitt," says the Reviewer, "was the only great critic of paintings in the recent period. He understood them both theoretically and practically. He brought to bear upon the subject a mind stored with knowledge, a fine taste, an acute intellect, and an enthusiastic love of the art. He described and analysed a fine picture with glowing eloquence. It has been beautifully said of his writings, that 'they threw a light upon the subject, like that of a painted window.'"

of Collins. Fine as it unquestionably is, I do not think it the best of Campbell's Lyrics. I prefer his "Ye Mariners of England" and "The Battle of the Baltic." His songs of a more quiet tone have a blended vigour and pathos of sentiment, and a spirit and harmony of versification, that make them quite unrivalled by any other Lyrics in the English language. They are perhaps superior to Thomas Moore's; for though less ingenious, they are not less elegant or finished, and have far more truth and nature. "The Soldier's Dream," for instance, is beyond all praise. The melody of the verse and the touching tenderness of the images are irresistibly enchanting. How exquisite is the description at the close!

"My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er,
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart.

Stay, stay with us,—rest, thou art weary and worn;
And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay!—
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away!"

In Gertrude of Wyoming there are, as Hazlitt truly says, some peerless descriptions. That for instance of Gertrude's childhood.

"Till now in Gertrude's eyes their ninth blue summer shone."

Mr. Campbell talks modestly of his hopes of immortality; but he does not affect to be wholly unconscious of his real claims. He greatly admires Goldsmith, whose works have still a wide and steady popularity, though not a noisy one; he would be well content with a fame like that of the author of "The Deserted Village." The disciples of the Lake School would lift up their eyes at such an instance of humility, for they class Goldsmith with the followers of the degraded French School, at the head of which, by the way, they place Dryden, the most English of English Poets.

Mr. Campbell now seldom writes poetry, and has taken a fancy to study languages, particularly the German.

NO. IV.—THE REVEREND EDWARD IRVING.

Mr. IRVING may fairly occupy a station amongst "The Spirits of the age." I do not mean that his individual character illustrates the tone and temper of the time, but that he is one of those who stand forth prominently from the crowd, and obtain by force or favour the especial notice of their contemporaries. So far from his presenting in his own person an illustration of the moral or intellectual character of the present period, or exhibiting a sympathy with the prevailing manners and opinions, he seems to have been born an age too late, and to form a singular contrast to the generation with whom a capricious fate has associated him. He is not in keeping with his own times, and reminds us of some wild yet stately figure of the antique world, introduced into a modern picture in strange juxta-position with the latest fashions and refinements. We could fancy such an enthusiast, with his picturesque figure, his wild gestures and his wilder words, preaching amidst romantic hills beneath a troubled sky. Had he been one of the old covenanters or puritans, Sir Walter Scott would have seized upon his character, and have worked it up into something as striking and impressive as any of those portraits of religious enthusiasts which abound in his inimitable historical romances. The preacher would have had a fine imposing aspect, lifting up his solemn voice, amidst his native mountains. But the Caledonian Chapel in London was too like a fashionable theatre. The gay costumes of the ladies and the fopperies of the beaux were fatally opposed to all unity or solemnity of effect. The associations excited by the preacher's voice and manner, were destroyed by a single glance at the mixed and uncongenial congregation. Nevertheless, people of all ranks and ages were fascinated; and the very difficulty of gaining admittance increased the crowd at the doors and the popularity of the pulpit orator. The extension of notoriety, after the first impulse, is easy and rapid. It increases like a school-boy's rolling snowball. This

plaything, however, is sometimes dissolved by an unexpected thaw, and then the game is over. This has already been Mr. Irving's fate. His spell has vanished. Though he is not entirely deserted, his followers are of a very different class from those who honored him with their applause in his happier days. On his first appearance in London he created an extraordinary and unprecedented sensation. Men of genius and Ministers of State flocked to see and hear him. All great excitements, however, are of short duration, and the charm of novelty is so subtle and evanescent that it is no sooner recognized than it evaporates. Those qualities which most startle and amaze us at first sight are the least calculated to sustain a continued interest. They soon become flat as a thrice-told tale.

Yet Mr. Irving, after all, is no ordinary man, though it is his misfortune to have been so extravagantly overrated. The subsequent re-action has been proportionably severe. Many with whom he was a nine days' wonder, are now content to sneer at his pretensions and to treat him as a charlatan. If he had not been so courted and eulogized at first, and if, instead of trusting as he did to something like stage-trick and the mere force of external eccentricities, he had gradually worked his way into notice in a legitimate manner; his fame would have been far less brilliant but more enduring. Praise is said to be a cheap commodity; but still mankind are generally very economical in the distribution of it, and when they are particularly lavish, it is by fits and starts. They seem invariably to revenge themselves on their former idols, as soon as they discover in their moments of cool reflection that they have been too profuse in their tributes of admiration. They then run into an opposite extreme, take back more than they are entitled to, and think by a cruel injustice to atone for a generous error.

It is impossible to meet Mr. Irving for the first time without being struck with the singularity of his appearance. As he per-

ambulates the streets of London, every passenger turns round to gaze upon him. His height alone would render him an object of some interest, for his dark head and Atlantean shoulders always tower above the crowd, and are conspicuous at a considerable distance. He is not precisely what one of our living poets has been oddly described to be, " a noticeable man with large *grey* eyes," but the description would answer for Mr. Irving with the change of a single epithet. Mr. Irving's eyes are not grey, but black; and his hair, which is remarkably abundant, is of the same hue. His features (with the exception of his eyes, for he has a slight cast in them which rather adds to, than diminishes, the impressiveness of his general appearance) are regular and handsome. There is a manly beauty in his limbs, and something even grand and majestic in the general contour of his figure. His action and attitudes in the pulpit are theatrical and extravagant; but yet they are highly picturesque, and would interest a painter. Some people have traced in him a vague resemblance to Kean, but this fancy arises perhaps more from an unconscious comparison of their styles than of their features or figures. Kean is as small in stature as Irving is colossal, and when we have said that they have both dark hair and dark eyes the personal parallel must cease. Still, however, setting aside all merely physical comparison, there is some truth in the idea that Irving is to the pulpit what Kean is to the stage. They have both introduced a more impassioned tone of delivery and a freer and more elaborate manner into their respective professions. In personal appearance Mr. Irving reminds me a good deal of the portraits of Paganini; the wonderful original I have not had the good fortune either to see or hear. Mr. Irving has quite a foreign air—a wild Italian look. If he were seen preaching to Banditti, amidst the kind of scenery that Salvator Rosa loved to paint, he would not seem out of place. His herculean frame, his imposing aspect, and his fine voice materially contribute to the success of his declamations.

He may well speak with energy and décision, with such accompaniments to support him and to give a colour to his pretensions. It has been happily suggested in one of Hazlitt's essays, that if Mr. Irving had been a little weak man, with a woman's voice aud common-place features, he would never have been notorious. His calvinistic thunders would have passed unheeded, or have only filled his hearers with a sense of the ridiculous. He is no Napoleon. He has not that magnitude of mind which might have rendered us forgetful of a small body. With his external advantages, for a brief period, he carried every thing before him. A consciousness of his adventitious power made him bold and adventurous. But though so much indebted to his personal peculiarities, some portion of the effect which he produced must be attributed to the corresponding peculiarities of his language, and the novel nature of the subjects which he treated. He touched on politics, and attacked both men and measures. He quoted poetry, and lauded or abused the poets. The attractive names of Brougham and Canning, Coleridge and Wordsworth, and Southey and Byron, gave a strange piquancy to his pulpit discourses. His expressions are quaint in the extreme, and he sometimes abruptly varies his style from a bald simplicity to a florid bombast. His *printed* sermons have created no sensation. No one can read them. Mr. Irving's hearers are more easily satisfied than his readers, because his matter is so much embellished and assisted by his manner. The reader may fall asleep, but not the hearer. Nevertheless with all his errors of taste and judgment, though Mr. Irving is perhaps not a man of much original genius, he unquestionably possesses great and peculiar talents, and there are passages even in his printed works that breathe a fine religious enthusiasm, and are singularly rich, racy and forcible in the expression. He cannot, however, sustain an uniform style or an equal degree of excellence for two succesive pages; and we are often shocked with the most grotesque absur-

dities and fantastical superstitions, oddly intermixed with a great deal of close and cogent argument. On the whole, it is not to be denied that Mr. Irving is a very remarkable man, let us analyze his qualities as we may; and those who have not seen or heard him, and who feel an interest in what Pope calls "the proper study of mankind," have reason to regret that the opportunity has been denied to them of observing so singular a specimen of human nature.

NO. V.—CRABBE.

The writer of a life of Crabbe prefixed to the French edition of his works, has made some very injudicious remarks on the character of his poetry. With the usual partiality of an editor he exaggerates the poetical excellencies of the subject of his memoir at the expense of other writers, and seems to think that to do justice to Crabbe's descriptive powers it is necessary to underrate those of Thomson, the most accurate and animated of our painter-poets. Crabbe's descriptions, he says, "are not, like those of Thomson, of imaginary but of *real* nature." It is true that the author of "The Seasons" is somewhat more rich in his colouring and more fastidious in the choice of his subjects than Crabbe, but his pictures are not necessarily less faithful because they are more enchanting. It is an unpardonable error to characterize Thomson's minute and exquisitely felicitous descriptions as deficient in fidelity to nature.

The critic just quoted seems to think that imagination is a quality essentially opposed to truth; a mistake which in these times would hardly be excusable in a schoolboy. It is almost idle to remark that it is the superior vigour and delicacy of his imagination which enables a painter of genius to catch the subtle hues of nature with greater facility than ordinary men. It is not the prosaic bareness of a picture that is any test of its truth. Claude's landscapes, over which he has breathed the very soul of poetry,

are as true to nature as the most literal and coarse production that ever came from a Dutchman's pencil. The fault of Crabbe is that he is too partial to mean and unpromising subjects. Whatever is poetical must, in a certain sense, be true; but it does not follow that all truth must be poetical. A late writer of considerable critical acumen, though a little too sectarian in his opinions, has even gone so far as to deny to Crabbe the possession of poetical genius, and regrets that he has given a great deal of solid and useful information in a very injudicious form. He thinks that Crabbe's strong good sense and varied knowledge are of a kind that would have appeared to better advantage in a prose dress. This is carrying the objection to Crabbe's style beyond truth and justice, though it is by no means so unreasonable as the opposite prejudice of the editor of the French edition, who appears to think Crabbe's defects superior to Thomson's beauties. Crabbe's peculiar faults are happily greatly outweighed by his peculiar excellencies. In the midst of his minute and matter-of-fact details, his stern sarcasms, his verbal quibbles, his ludicrous alliterations and his coarse diction, there are gleams of fancy, accompanied with indications of a profound knowledge of the heart, and a wonderful force, beauty, and fidelity of description both of human manners and of external nature.

Crabbe resembles no living writer. Of his later predecessors he reminds us most of Cowper and Goldsmith, whose opposite peculiarities are often strangely mingled in the same page. In the touching picture of the parish Poor-House, he recalls to our minds the author of "The Deserted Village;" and in the rough, manly vigour with which he dissects such characters as a vain and cold-hearted village apothecary and a sporting clergyman, he seems to have impregnated himself with the spirit of Cowper in his satiric moods. But he is on the whole far less attractive than either of these poets. He is more powerful, but less delicate and refined than Goldsmith; and though he often describes the same

objects, he invariably imbues them with darker colours, and seems determined to omit nothing that is offensive or degrading. Though he resembles Cowper in the force and bitterness of his irony, and the truth of his descriptions, he has little of his poetic ardour or elevation. His verse, which is chiefly confined to the couplet measure, seems a mixture of Pope's, Cowper's, Darwin's and Goldsmith's, a compound not always relished by an ear accustomed to the new modes of versification. The school to which Pope, Goldsmith and Darwin are considered to have belonged, and from the trammels of which even Cowper was scarcely free, was in fashion when Crabbe paid his first addresses to the Muse, and he appears to have brought down a portion of the poetical style and creed of that day to the present time. He and Rogers (and perhaps we may add, Campbell) are the links between what is now called the Lake school, and the poetry of a preceding period.

NO. VI.—LORD BROUGHAM.

There is no public character now living with whom this distinguished man can be compared. He stands alone in his greatness. He is as much above ordinary politicians as Milton was above ordinary poets. He is an intellectual giant, and dwarfs all his associates, though many of them are "men of mark and likelihood." Perhaps no statesman in any age or country ever exercised so mighty and immediate an influence on the characters and opinions of his contemporaries. This results partly from his almost universal knowledge and his vigorous grasp of intellect, and partly from his having appeared at a time of great excitement when men eagerly look for a guide upon whom they can rely. His far-seeing and almost prophetic eye, his bold bearing and his indomitable energy, both physical and mental, are qualities admirably fitted for a great popular leader. If his own party, consisting as it does of some of the foremost men of all this world, present no rival or kindred spirit, what pigmies does

he make of his opponents! They afford him only food for his mirth, yea, for his laughter. The satire of Brougham is a heavy but unfailing instrument. It does not play round the head, but reaches the heart. His smiles are sometimes more terrible than the frowns of other men. It has been said that he is not an effective party-man, because his oratory is too often offensive, and too rarely persuasive. But persuasion has been tried too long. The evils of corruption, tyranny and misrule have at last become so utterly intolerable, that it would be a mockery to treat their supporters with hollow courtesies. A more vigorous and trenchant system of warfare is now called for to put down the enemies of liberty and truth. Nothing can so effectually silence them as the voice of Brougham. They tremble at the thunder of his eloquence and the lightning of his satire. There is no man living that we could not better spare. His very name is a tower of strength, and the most audacious of his opponents are ashamed to speak with unqualified contempt of a cause to which he lends it.

The most remarkable excellence of Lord Brougham's mind is its universality. He is not a mere encyclopedic genius with a general but shallow knowledge of most subjects and a mastery of none. He speaks on every occasion like one having authority. This variety and extent of power is rare indeed; for such is the ordinary limitation of the human capacity, that to excel in any one particular art or science usually demands a concentration of mind at once exclusive and severe. "Painting," said Michael Angelo, "is a jealous god, and requires the whole man." When a purchaser expressed himself dissatisfied at the price of one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures, and inquired how long he had taken to paint it, the artist replied *a whole life;* meaning that it was the labour of a whole life, that had enabled him to execute the smallest work in the manner worthy of his fame. The same principle equally applies to all other arts and sciences. It re-

quires a vast and wonderful force of mind to be able to grapple effectually with a variety of subjects. Men of such gigantic intellect are produced but rarely and at long intervals. In the present age there is perhaps too great a tendency to generalize education. Such men as Bacon and Brougham may search into all things with a learned and laborious spirit, but the powers of inferior intellects are enfeebled by too much latitude and an indiscriminate voracity of knowledge. They who are not fully conscious of possessing extreme energy and immense capacity should be content with a more moderate range of subjects ; for even men of real genius and originality of mind may overstrain their powers and injure themselves by too much exertion. The division of labour is, generally speaking, the cause of excellence in individuals as well as in communities. Some of Lord Brougham's professional enemies, envious of his rapid rise above them, have hinted that he is an indifferent lawyer ; and it is more than probable that he does not excel in verbal quibbles and minute details. A similar accusation was brought against Lord Bacon by no less a person than Queen Elizabeth. "Bacon," said her Majesty, "hath many excellent flowers of wit, but he is no great lawyer." The present Lord Chancellor may well afford to smile at an accusation, to which even such a glorious predecessor was exposed. Men of narrow views cannot duly appreciate the greatness of such a mind as Lord Brougham's, though they are disturbed by a vague sense of his superiority, and are chilled and disheartened by the shadow into which he throws them.

The name of Brougham is so closely connected with every great political event of the nineteenth century, and he has been such an active and efficient leader in the great march of mind that has achieved such amazing triumphs over the ignorance and bigotry descended to us from the "good old times," that no public man of the present day is more secure of a favorable place in the annals of his country, perhaps indeed, in the history of the

world. The time has arrived when the benefactors of the human race are no longer in danger of sinking into oblivion or insignificance by the side of kings and conquerors. A discoverer or a guide in the realms of mind may now look for that just appreciation of his merits which until Lord Brougham sent the Schoolmaster abroad was so generally denied to him. A Brougham or a Bentham exercises a more enduring sway over the human mind, and eventually over the destinies of nations, than a Wellington or a Bonaparte. It is a more difficult and noble task to eradicate an error from the head than to pass a sword through the heart. It is delightful to observe so powerful a mind as Lord Brougham's devoted with indefatigable toil and unabated zeal to the cause of freedom and to the interests of the poor. The eloquence of his tongue and pen has always been employed to some noble purpose, and those wondrous physical and mental exertions which have never been surpassed by the most energetic slaves of Mammon, are all so many generous sacrifices of his personal ease for the benefit of mankind.

But though his powers are so various and gigantic, his oratory is not in every respect what his admirers would wish it to be. He has vast strength and wide and noble views, but he is less rarely carried away by a lofty and sustained enthusiasm than by a tumultuous emotion of something like personal anger. His imagination, though great compared with that of ordinary men, is not equal to his other endowments. A prodigious force of understanding and an undaunted spirit are the qualities most impressed upon his hearers. He is one of the most vigorous and just of reasoners, but he seems to scorn to sweeten his medicine to the general taste. He does not wind into a subject like a snake, as Goldsmith said of Burke; but he seizes it like a tiger, and soon tears to tatters the toughest sophistries of his antagonists. But of all his powers as a speaker his withering sarcasm

is perhaps the most effective and characteristic. It is absolutely appalling.

☞ This article was writen several years ago; since then Lord Brougham has somewhat disappointed his admirers by showing too great a readiness to quarrel with his friends, and less disposition than of old to keep aloof from the enemies of the people.

NO. VII.—WILSON.

The poetry of Professor Wilson is not adapted to the general taste. It is addressed to a limited class of readers who think and feel like the author himself. It is not every eye that can trace his dreamy and indistinct creations. His mind is like a twilight lake, in which the reflections of material things assume vague and unsubstantial aspects. There is rarely in the poetry of Wilson any ordinary incident or worldly passion to arouse the sympathy of common readers. He is in every respect the opposite of Crabbe. He deals not in histories of daily events, in descriptions of vulgar life, or in simple revelations of the human heart; but he leads us, with glimmering and uncertain lights, into the most aërial regions of imagination. His Muse has no footing on the earth. She dallies with the sunbeams, glides like a shadow over the breezy mountains, and holds converse with " the gorgeous company of clouds."

Yet though the poetry of Wilson can never be truly popular, it wins from the least congenial reader, however dazzled and perplexed, an instant acknowledgment of the author's genius. But the admiration it excites is rarely allied to love. For its full appreciation and enjoyment it requires such an intense abstraction of mind from all ordinary thoughts and objects, and such an unflagging attention to the subtle and ever-shifting hues of the poet's fancy, that there are few who can long accompany him without a sense of weariness and confusion. His poetry is full of beauties, but they are of such a gossamer-like consistency, of so

ethereal a texture, and are so enveloped in a glittering mist of words, that none but those who take an especial delight in forgetting this material world and revelling in a land of visions, have the patience to trace out each almost evanescent charm, or a sufficient sympathy with the enchanter to submit entirely to his sway and to sacrifice all familiar associations. When Wilson's readers are unimaginative, or when they are disposed to be cold and critical, his genius is impotent and his spell is broken. His power as a prose writer throws his poetry into the shade, because his essays and criticisms, though somewhat too inflated and declamatory, are better suited to the comprehension of the general reader. It is true that they are often characterized by the same dreaminess of fancy, and the same exaggerated tone of sentiment and redundant yet felicitous phraseology; but in prose compositions the poet cannot always be on the wing, and he is compelled at frequent intervals to alight upon the common earth and hold communion with its humblest inhabitants.

The effect of Wilson's poetical imaginings is too frequently injured by the indistinctness of his style; and his descriptions are sometimes so unnecessarily mystical and florid, as to bewilder our senses, instead of illustrating the object that he would place before us. Familiar things are disguised under an ostentatious wealth of ornament.

But let not the spirit of criticism carry us too far in our objections. It must not be forgotten that many of Wilson's errors are occasioned by a very rare excess of some of the finest elements of genius. His great merit consists in his fervid admiration of intellectual beauty—in the delicacy and spirituality of his fancy—his religious love of nature, and his exquisite perception of her least obvious charms—his deep domestic tenderness, and his pure and elevated faith in the natural excellence of the heart of man. Though his metre is occasionally somewhat deficient in strength and firmness, it is always very sweet and flowing; and his diction

is often steeped in beauty, and glows and sparkles like a bed of flowers on a fresh spring morning.

NO. VIII.—MISS CAROLINE BOWLES*.

In the *Quarterly Review*, (in an article which has been generally attributed to Southey, and in which the internal evidence of the authorship is too strong to admit of a moment's doubt) Miss Bowles is thus alluded to—"The authoress of the '*Widow's Tale*,' and those sweet poems in the little volume of '*Solitary Hours*,' which for truth and depth of feeling, and for tenderness and holiness of thought, are among the most beautiful that have been produced in this generation." In the *Progress and Prospects of Society* a passage is taken from one of her finest poems, and is thus acknowledged :—"These lines are quoted from a little volume, entitled '*Solitary Hours*,' which with the *Widow's Tale*, &c. of the same authoress, I recommend to all admirers of that poetry which proceeds from the heart."

One reason why the name of Miss Bowles is less familiar to the public than that of L. E. L. or Mrs. Hemans, is the retiring modesty with which she has omitted it from the title pages of her several works. Many of the lovers of poetry have some of her smaller poems by heart, though they know not to whom they are indebted for the beautiful thoughts and melodious sounds that haunt their hearts and ears.

The volume entitled *Solitary Hours* (which was published in 1826) is a collection of brief compositions in prose and verse; the latter far superior to the former. Miss Bowles's early prose, as is the case with most young authors in whom the imagination is the predominant faculty, exhibited a want of ease and accuracy not observable in her first verses, in which the thoughts involuntarily move harmonious numbers; and though there is often great

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* Now Mrs. Southey. The Poet Laureate always admired her poetry, and a personal friendship of 20 years has ended in love and wedlock.

beauty in her prose work entitled *Chapters on Churchyards*, it must be acknowledged that she is entitled to a higher rank as a poet than as a prose writer. In most of her poetry there is nothing requiring alteration or improvement; but her prose, with all its beauty, is occasionally a little inflated and ostentatious, a fault of which she is never guilty when she pours out her soul in verse. In the year 1836 Miss Bowles published a blank verse poem, entitled *The Birthday*, which was noticed at great length and with enthusiastic praise in *Blackwood's Magazine*. But her smaller pieces are perhaps more truly characteristic of the best qualities of her genius. No parent can read her exquisite address *To a Dying Infant* without deep emotion; and indeed no man or woman with a human heart can fail to recognize its truth and tenderness.

In all the literary circles of England, Miss Bowles is well known and greatly admired, but to the public in general, her name is the name of a stranger; while the names of Felicia Hemans, and Letitia Landon, are as familiar as household words. And yet her productions are at least equal to the works of those popular writers. But the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, or Miss Bowles would have taken a far more prominent station amongst the poets of the day. Her triumph, however, is yet to come, and she will assuredly reap a rich harvest of praise and admiration, when many who have gathered an earlier crop, shall lament that their brief season of sunshine and success has passed away for ever. It is melancholy to reflect upon the vicissitudes of literature. Nothing is more changeable and uncertain than poetic fame. It depends upon so many adventitious circumstances. A poet may be born an age too soon or too late—he may be puffed into a sudden elevation, only to be hurled down again into the gulph of oblivion by the stern re-action that always follows undeserved laudation—or he may have timid or prosaic friends that check his ambition, or fierce and indefatigable enemies that frighten him into silence, with ridicule and

calumny,—or he may have a rival in his own peculiar line, whose glare of fame attracts all eyes away from lesser luminaries that might have shone proudly in his absence,—or he may have failed to procure the friendship of some leading literary journalist, who by repeated and earnest notices might have forced his merits into public notice,—or he may have entrusted his offspring to some tasteless and unfashionable publisher, without influence, energy or ambition. When a disappointed bard of the present day, conscious of some share of merit, looks over the list of the popular poets of the past generation, he may well be excused for wondering at the uncertainty of the public taste. Many a neglected and despised writer of these times, has produced verses that would have excited a sensation in the reign of the Kings and the Dukes, the Pomfrets and the Eusdens, the Walsh's and the Welsteds, the Fentons and the Sprats. This small fry played about exultingly in the sunlit stream of fame for no inconsiderable period. But it is satisfactory to reflect, that though it has often happened, that authors of little or no merit have enjoyed a temporary popularity, no work of real genius that has once been fairly brought into public notice, has been suffered to fall into that entire oblivion, which has sooner or later been the fate of every truly worthless production, however much it may have been upheld and overrated for awhile.

NO. IX.—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The religious and the poetical opinions of Shelley were generally extravagant and absurd; the dreamings of a visionary. His imagination was too little under the restraint of judgment even in his poetry, but when he entered upon the plain grounds of politics and religion, it led him into mistakes of the most glaring character. Nothing but a conviction of the real warmth and sincerity of his heart, could make a generous reader forgive the gross

errors of his intellect. Shelley had vast genius, but yet his mind was in some degree unsound. His faculties were not well balanced. To use the jargon of the phrenologists, his *bump* of reason was small indeed, compared to that of ideality. He was deficient too in taste and judgment, even as a poet. He was vastly rich in the materials of his art, but he did not know how to turn them to a good account. His muse was a fine lady over-ornamented with ill-arranged jewels. There is a want of repose and keeping in his poetry. His admirers cannot lay their hands on a single poem that is not studded with beauties as thickly as the stars in heaven, but like those stars they shine out from the dark. They are in strong contrast with deep shades of error. If his beauties are numerous, they are not more so than his defects. He is generally unhappy in his choice of subjects or in his mode of treating them. The least imperfect and most equal of his works, the tragedy of *Cenci,* is absolutely disgusting from the nature of the subject. It is strange that the writer could expect such a work to gain an entrance into domestic circles. Swift had an unnatural craving after filthy subjects, and Shelley had an equally unnatural leaning towards such as are morally repulsive. It is impossible, therefore, that he should ever become a popular poet, unless a very great change (and one by no means for the better) should take place in the moral tone of society. But this is not the only bar to his success. His imagination was magnificently fertile; but, as it has been already said, his faculties were not well proportioned. He was singularly defective in those powers which might have given direction, consistency and completeness to his fitful, fragmentary and dream-like visions. His poems are all imperfect. His inspiration was convulsive—not continuous. One verse is a miracle of genius—the next is detestable. In one line we have a flash of ethereal light, in another "chaos is come again." From no poet could there be selected single lines or brief, unconnected passages, of such startling and surpassing

beauty, but it really cannot be said that there is a single one of his poems which has not some strange defect in it. One of the most beautiful of his short pieces, is the "Lines written in dejection in the Bay of Naples." Some of the stanzas contain the most exquisitely pathetic and melodious lines that were ever written, but others again are absolutely unintelligible. Who can explain the meaning of the last stanza* ? It is something like the opening of Dyer's Grongar Hill, the meaning of which would never have been guessed at, if Scott of Amwell had not discovered an early version of the poem in the form of an ode, in which "The silent Nymph with curious eye," is plainly addressed as FANCY. There is no fault so injurious to the success of a poem as obscurity. The reader is soon disgusted with the labor of discovering hidden meanings. Poetry is addressed to the general heart. Its first object is pleasure (though indirect instruction ought to follow), and nothing is more calculated to injure its effect, than a want of clearness and simplicity. With all his high genius, Shelley has little chance of an immortality on earth. If he had struck out from his writings, all that was far-fetched, extravagant and obscure, and shaped them into poems of more completeness, he would have left us less than one-third of the quantity; but *that* small portion would have lived for ever! It is a truism that requires frequent repetition in this day, when voluminousness is mistaken for power, that the *quality* and not the *quantity* of any production is the test of its value. Too many of our living writers are cursed with a fatal facility. They cannot reduce their excrescences. It is like cutting off their flesh. But if the greatest of living poets, William Wordsworth, were judiciously to reduce his works to one half of their present extent, his loss would be a gain. The poets of the present day seem to think, that whatever is written easily must be easy reading, and

* A line is wanting in the *first* stanza.

that whatever is once born of the brain, has as much right to live, as the offspring of the body.

NO. X.—THOMAS MOORE.

It is the fashion amongst the admirers of the Lake school to speak with unqualified contempt of the poetry of Thomas Moore. This is extravagant injustice. If he is not the best poet of the day he is certainly not the worst. If he has many faults, he has also many merits of no ordinary kind. He has not much genuine pathos, and no simple nature. When he aims at energy he is strained and bombastic; and when he attempts to represent human passions, we are sure to have a great deal of sound and fury signifying nothing. Though Mr. Moore's imagination is rather feeble, compared to that of most of our first rate poets, there is not a writer in the English language, who has exhibited such an extraordinary wealth of *fancy*. It is inexhaustible. The whole creation glitters in his eyes. He looks upon nothing in the heavens above or in the earth beneath, that is not instantly associated with some resplendent image. Every thing gleams and sparkles with restless brilliancy, like the breeze-stirred leaves of trees after a summer shower and in a cheerful burst of sunshine. The misfortune is, that Moore's wealth of imagery tempts him to an idle ostentation, and that his Muse is, accordingly, too often more fine than elegant. He never seems to understand the maxim of Thomson, that nature when unadorned is adorned the most; and he dwells so much upon the mere drapery and embellishment, that he tempts the critic to accuse him of a deficiency of skill in the higher departments of his art.

"Poets, like painters, when unskilled to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art."

In fact it cannot be denied, that resplendent imagery too often forms the ground-work of his productions, instead of their embel-

lishment. His characters are lay figures, on which to hang the most gorgeously bespangled garments. They are not of flesh and blood. They are like theatrical angels or demons, that owe every thing to paint, to dress, and to scenery. Byron was the true poet of *passion*, and directly Thomas Moore attempts to enter upon his rival's ground he sinks into mere common-place or cold extravagance. He is most at home when he is thinking of sparkling eyes and illuminated halls. But his notions of female beauty are imperfect. He is too fond of analyzing or enumerating the various points of excellence, and does not leave any unity or distinctness of impression upon the reader's mind. He gives us a rich assemblage of charms ; but he gives the same to all his heroines, and they have all the requisite supply of starry eyes, cherry lips, rosy-cheeks and sylph-like figures. But, as he might have learned from Pope,

> " 'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call,
> But the joint force and full result of all."

The poetry of the author of Lalla Rookh is more thoroughly oriental than he perhaps imagines. An overwhelming display of fanciful imagery is precisely the besetting sin of all Eastern poets, whose jewellery completely throws into "a *privacy* of *light*" the subject it is intended to illustrate and embellish. This richness of fancy is in them—and we fear in Moore also—generally unaccompanied with depth of thought or strength of imagination. The great poets rarely dazzle and fatigue the reader with scenes that, glitter all over like streams in the noon-day sun. The pages of Milton and Shakespeare do not perpetually flash and sparkle, but yet are always rendered clear and distinct by the broad light of imagination.

But now let us turn to the best side of the picture. Where is the writer who has moved in the golden fetters of verse with more ease and grace than Thomas Moore: and that this is not a trivial accomplishment, or one of easy attainment, may

be shown by a reference to the labours, in the same department of their art, by the greatest poets that ever lived, and to the vast number of failures amongst those who have aimed at the same excellence. His rhymes almost always seem the consequence of the idea to be expressed, and not the cause. The words flow as easily and unaffectedly in his most intricate measures, as they do in elegant and familiar conversation. The reader is delighted to find a great difficulty so admirably overcome, and this success is so rare, that the pleasure is heightened by surprise. We really can remember no poet who has exhibited such an easy mastery over the mechanism of his art. Milton's versification is undoubtedly more learned and elaborate, but it is so obviously artificial, that a child can perceive the trace of labour. Moore's poetry reads as if it were the writer's natural mode of expressing his thoughts and feelings. Not that it is always natural in the *matter*, but that the *manner* is exactly suited to the character of the poet's mind. It seems not the result of labour or affectation. In all those measures which are characterized by that obvious melody the charm of which is appreciated by the general ear, he is uniformly successful. We do not much like his heroic couplet, in which he has endeavoured, after the manner of our elder writers, to vary the full periods and cœsural pauses ; but nothing can be more exquisitely perfect in point of versification, than most of his octosyllabic lines, and indeed all the Irish Melodies. To a wonderfully rich fancy and a fine ear for the harmonies of verse, he adds the great advantages of extreme ingenuity of thought, a lively sense of beauty, (especially in woman,) a turn for elegant compliments, in which he rivals even Pope himself, and a readiness of playful satire, in which he has never been surpassed. Perhaps the prime quality of his mind is wit. It seems ever ready at his call, and has always a double effect from its ease and spontaneity. For piquancy and point, delivered with an air of unconscious facility, nothing in the language can be compared with his

political squibs. Let them appear how or where they may, the author's hand is instantaneously recognized. They exhibit a delightful combination of wit and fancy, and these qualities are rendered peculiarly effective by the graceful volubility of the verse. He moves with more readiness and grace in rhyme than others do in prose. His satire never wants point, and always enchants the reader with its inimitable ease. He surpasses Prior in his arch allusions and in the smoothness and facility of his style. He cannot so well handle the heavy flail of Churchill, but he has fifty times his cunning in the use of a genteeler weapon. Satirists, however, have generally to work with temporary materials. Their genius is thrown away upon perishable themes. Moore is chiefly a party satirist, and nothing is more fugitive than the fashionable topics connected with politics. A new king or even a new administration may throw the cleverest political satires into utter and irretrievable oblivion.

It is melancholy to reflect upon the uncertainty of poetical fame, and to look back at the long file of highly-gifted men who, after being for many years the "observed of all observers," are now gradually passing away from us for ever into the dreary region of oblivion. Even they who have never felt the sunshine of fame, shrink with horror from the thought of being utterly forgotten.

> "For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey
> This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

Fortunately for the happiness of popular poets they are generally buoyed up during their natural lives with the hope of future fame, and reconcile themselves to the fate which is common to all mortals, with the proud anticipation of a second, and more enduring existence even upon the earth. There have been, however, favourite writers who have survived their fame. Hayley was an instance. We do not mean to compare Thomas Moore

with such a writer as Hayley, who was literally no poet. This cannot be said of the author of Lalla Rookh, who is as decidedly a true poet as any writer of his time, though the rank and character of his genius, and his chance of immortality may be open to doubt and disputation.

That Thomas Moore has not the deep philosophical sentiment of Wordsworth, nor the burning energy of Byron, nor the classical purity and precision of Campbell, nor the rich stateliness of Southey, nor the simple nature of Crabbe, nor the wild and rich imagination of Shelley or of Coleridge, must be at once admitted; but neither have any of these great writers individually, all the attributes of his contemporaries. Nature is too sparing of her nobler gifts to lavish them on a single person. Thomas Moore we repeat has one of the endowments of a true poet—*a prolific fancy,* and in this respect he has no superior. He has also a larger share of mere wit of a light and playful kind, than has fallen to the lot of any other English author. Surely, then, he cannot be regarded as an ordinary writer, and ought not to be spoken of with disrespect.

NO. XI.—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

It is curious to observe, how much even pretty good judges are often carried away for a time by mere novelty and the force of general opinion. The very critics, who in the first flush of Byron's popularity, elevated him to the throne of modern poetry, now go into the opposite extreme, and will hardly allow him any merit at all*. Scott has met with a similar fate; while almost every review-

* Since the death of Lord Byron, poetry has lost much of its attraction for general readers. It is no longer fashionable. Even before his death, the public mind was almost satiated with his melodramatic horrors, and his grand and gloomy egotism became every day less impressive. People were tired of seeing the same actor in so many different costumes and situations, as they recognized in a moment his individual tone and aspect under every disguise. He had little invention—no dramatic genius—and was compelled on all occasions to deli-

er in Great Britian now joins in the general acclamations on the rise of Wordsworth to the top of his profession, who a few years ago was very generally spoken of with almost unmitigated contempt. The truth is, that the mob of critics, however capable of discovering, or rather of appreciating, when pointed out by others, the beauties of individual authors, when forced into popularity or fame, are not generally guided in their judgments by any fixed and independent principles; and accordingly, they must receive a hint either from the public or from some leading member of their own class, before they have the courage to deal in general praise or censure. It is a comparatively easy task to point out beauties or defects in a writer whose character is settled. The difficulty is to decide on the real character of a poet, before any clue is derived from higher individual authority than our own, or before his success or failure at the bar of the public. A smart school-boy, well acquainted by report with the character of Milton, or of Shakespeare, would find it no very difficult task to select their most beautiful passages; but if the works of those mighty authors were presented to an ordinary full grown critic for the first time, unaccompanied by a single whisper of their greatness, it

neate his own sombre character. His eloquent misanthropy and his disdainful pride produced at first a powerful effect from their novelty and boldness; but latterly, nothing but the force and animation of his style enabled him to retain his influence over the public mind. It became thoroughly understood that it was in vain to expect any absolutely new creations from the mint of Byron's fancy. His own lordly physiognomy was stamped on every coin. But this uniformity of style and barrenness of invention were forgiven him, on account of his impassioned sensibility and his incomparable energy of expression. He had always ready at his command the thoughts that breathe and the words that burn. His concentration, his force, and his perspicuity, were qualities that rendered him acceptable to all classes of readers. The same degree of egotism and the same monotony of tone and subject in a feebler writer, would hardly have been tolerated for a day. But genuine intellectual power, however ill-directed, must always secure the attention of mankind. It may be feared or hated, but it cannot be despised.

We may prophecy with perfect safety, that the poetry of Lord Byron, though it will probably be less highly esteemed by posterity than it was by his contemporaries, will never be neglected or forgotten.

is by no means certain that he would rightly and at once understand the nature of their claims. The history of literature teems with the ludicrously false judgments of professed critics. And yet the fate of authors is not a mere lottery or accident. We find that all truly great writers have received full justice, sooner or later; and that mere flashy scribblers, however popular in their day, have gone out at last like a waxen taper, and have left nothing but an impenetrable gloom of oblivion behind them. It is certain then, that a due study of the nature of literary merit must give to a sagacious critic, who is independent of extrinsic and adventitious considerations, the power to prognosticate with tolerable accuracy, the future fate of a contemporary author, let his present reception from the public be what it may. He need not inquire at the publishers of a poet, whether his poems are saleable or not—*that* is no criterion. He has only to consider, whether there is the degree of truth and nature in his productions, which he recognizes in the works of those who have acquired a lasting fame. The public are often for a while as fickle as children, and are delighted with one new toy and disgusted with another, for little or no apparent reason;—but their final and deliberate decisions are almost invariably right.

Perhaps, no great poet has made more mistakes in criticism than Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He praised Bowles's sickly-sentimental effusions, for their *manliest melancholy*, and in every respect prodigiously overrated their merit; while he could see nothing but deformities in Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard, of which even his captious and unfriendly critic Johnson very truly observed, that had the poet often written thus, it would have been vain to praise, and useless to blame him. Johnson was himself an indifferent critic of highly imaginative poetry, but of that order of genius which is best adapted to the apprehension and delight of the general reader, he was perhaps one of the best judges that ever lived. He would have had little to say, how-

ever, in favor of such a writer as Coleridge himself, or of Keats and Shelley. They are out of the sphere in which he lived and moved, and had his being. His imagination had no wings, or if it had, they were of little use. It had no alacrity in rising from the ground, and was more like the ostrich than the eagle. It ran swiftly and safely enough on the solid ground, but ventured on no aërial experiments—on no voyages of discovery through the fields of air. He was too ponderous and substantial for that subtle atmosphere. Shakespeare says, that a knavish (or cunning) speech sleeps in a foolish ear, and certainly the effect of fine poetry in a similar way must depend very much on the intellectual character of the reader; and as we cannot expect that the multitude who devour the new novels of the circulating library, should listen with eagerness to the voice of a charmer like Coleridge, charm he never so wisely, we must not suppose that he will ever become the idol of the many, though they may be compelled to acknowledge the greatness of his genius. No man supposes that Milton is even at this day a popular writer; comparatively speaking very few read, though all praise him. Doctor Johnson acknowledged, that he had not read Milton through, until he found it necessary to do so, in order to select examples of the use of words for his English dictionary. *Christabel* and the *Ancient Mariner*, are not likely to be half so popular as some of Byron's melodramatic tales of blood and thunder. Perhaps even Coleridge's most exquisite *Tale of Love*, is a little too delicate and quiet and refined for the general reader, though nothing that he ever wrote is so pure and lovely in the conception, and so perfect in the execution. It is a gem of the first water. But this and the other two poems just mentioned, have the marks of immortality upon them, and will always delight readers of imagination and sensibility. There is a large quantity of his smaller miscellaneous poems that almost any body might have written, and which one regrets to see bound up for ever with productions of the

rarest excellence. What a pity it is that poets are not severer self-judges, or that they will not allow a few friends of taste aud discretion to suggest the omission from their collected works of all that is absolutely below the character of their genius. The poets of the present day, far beyond those of any previous period, are too self-indulgent, and imagine that everything that proceeds from them, is equally worthy of immortality. How many pages might be struck out of the works of Southey and Wordsworth and Coleridge and Shelley, that would be no loss to the public, while they only weaken the effect and obstruct the circulation of what is trulv excellent !

NO. XII.—LEIGH HUNT.

Few poets have more faults than Leigh Hunt. But if they were fifty times as many—if they were "thick as the autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa," they would not conceal or overpower his peculiar beauties. His best friends must observe with regret his studied negligence of metre, his affected novelties of diction, and the occasional idiomatic vulgarity of his style. But who would not forgive the rose its thorns, and pass over numerous defects, for the sake of still more numerous excellencies ? His sunny brightness of fancy, his depth and delicacy of observation, his freshness and tenderness of feeling, his intense love of nature, his happy power of description, his exuberant flow of animal spirits, the cheerful tone of his philosophy, his genuine worship of truth and freedom, and his frank, cordial, and familiar manner, are qualities which even those who may be most alive to his faults are often amongst the foremost to acknowledge and appreciate. These remarks apply with equal justice to his essays and his poems. As an essayist, he is in the same class as Lamb and Hazlitt, and takes his station perhaps between the two, mingling in his own works a large portion of the beauties of both. As a poet, some critics have connected him with the

Lake school; but though in his abhorrence of the more precise and formal style that was fashionable in what has been erroneously called the Augustan Era of English Poetry, he resembles the poets of the Lakes, he differs from them in many points of a very characteristic nature. Wordsworth would not acknowledge him as a disciple. He belongs to no school. Perhaps of all living poets the one to whom he may be most easily compared is Thomas Moore, and to whom he has already been compared by Hazlitt, though, as he is far less smooth, terse, and polished than the bard of Erin, the resemblance between them does not immediately strike the casual reader. Though he is not so well fitted to delight the drawing-room with brilliant common-places, his wealth of imagery, his sparkling and elaborate descriptions, his frequent richness and felicity of phrase, and, above all, a certain gay and social spirit, frequently remind us of some of the happiest traits of the author of Lalla Rookh. If he were more uniformly careful and fastidious in his diction, and aimed more at point and antithesis of style, the resemblance would be nearer. But trimness, smartness, and regularity, are Leigh Hunt's aversion. He affects "harmonious discords," and is ambitious to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art. Though he frequently gains his object, his failures are great and glaring in proportion to the glory of his success. One of his own beautiful lines may afford us an illustration. Moore directs the smooth, shining stream of his verse into a thousand beautiful meanderings, like lakes in pleasure-grounds; but Leigh Hunt lets it "wander at its own sweet will," or overrun, as it were, some breezy height, until,

"It shakes its loosening silver in the sun."

Leigh Hunt has perhaps a less grasp of intellect than Hazlitt, but his temperament is more joyous and tender, his perceptions more delicate and refined, and his fancy more poetical. What a frequent burst of sunshine lights up the pages of his *Rimini!*

And what exquisite humour, and delicacy and acuteness of observation, are displayed in his delightful prose Essays!

Leigh Hunt is even more agreeable as a companion than as an author. He has a constant flow of animal spirits, and his original remarks and illustrations are easily and pleasantly delivered. His clear brilliant images are poured out from the fancy-tinged fountain of his mind with wonderful rapidity. He adapts himself with great felicity to the character of the society into which he may happen to be thrown, and can not only endure with generous patience the company of an ordinary individual, but can usually find something agreeable and instructive in his conversation, however humble. He can

> "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

He is a most passionate admirer of the external world, and thinks with Milton that "a sullenness against nature," is a serious crime. For this reason, nothing displeases him so much as Methodistical lamentations. To him they appear not only common-place, but impious and untrue. He is an optimist. He dislikes the cold and ungracious creed of the Calvinist, and wonders how any one who is himself possessed of the common attributes of humanity, can be sceptical of human virtue, or while gazing upon the green fields and cloudless skies of a summer's day can offer God and Nature the doubtful compliment of a gloomy brow. He makes a firm stand against the dogmas of the Utilitarians, and considers that happiness, and whatever is most conducive to its progress, are the chief concern of the truly wise. All things are useful as they tend to this end, and no further. It may be said that virtue is a higher object, but happiness implies its presence, and indeed is only another term for virtuous emotion. A criminal is never happy. Poetry and the Fine Arts, which the Benthamites despise, because they do not comprehend, contribute to our happiness by awakening the most delicate sensibilities of the soul,

and are as *useful* in the strictest sense of the word, as scientific theories and inventions. Nothing is useful in this world, but what has eventual reference to the heart of man. Poetry is the expression of human passion. It has been contemptuously characterized as an idle dream; as a pleasing falsehood. If our existence itself be not a dream, the essence of poetry is truth. The Poet's soul is a mirror, that reflects more vividly than ordinary minds, the scenery of human life*.

* As the especial province of Poetry is to describe nature, human and inanimate, *truth* is, of course, its vital principle. The vulgar mistake of supposing all poetry to be necessarily false originates in the circumstance of poets being compelled to invent a certain artificial arrangement of personages and incidents; and it is because these identical personages never existed, and these particular incidents never happened, that unthinking people have hastily concluded that Poetry is a falsehood! But they should recollect that a Poet does not pretend to give an account of individual personages and particular incidents, but an exact representation of *human passions* and *external nature*. If we were to credit the traducers of "the art divine," the question of the personal existence of his hero, involves the Poet's character for common honesty. But he is the historian of *man*, and not of *men*—of the human heart, but not of individuals. His province is to describe our common nature, and the appearances of material things that affect us by their beauty or sublimity. The man who after hearing that Romeo and Juliet never actually existed, should accuse Shakespeare of a lie, would be guilty of an egregious blunder perfectly worthy of an Utilitarian. We do not inquire whether Romeo and Juliet lived in Venice or in London, in one century or another, or whether two persons of these names ever lived at all; but whether Shakespeare has truly developed in these dramatic characters the tender passion, as it exists in every age and country. The shadow of poetry is mistaken for the substance—the shell for the kernel. Rhymes—names—incidents, &c. form only the *machinery* of a vehicle constructed by genius for the conveyance and exhibition of treasures from the mine of nature.

It is supposing that men have not human affections, to pronounce them dead to the influence of poetry. "*All that is worth any thing in life is the poetry of it.*" Do not the rudest of our common sailors, while voyaging over the wide and solitary Atlantic on calm moon-light nights, occasionally think with tender emotion of their distant homes, and patriotically of their native Isle, until, although "unused to weep," the tears start into their eyes? This is poetry! Poets, in similar situations, have only to *express* similar feelings, and the world will hail them as the priests and interpreters of Nature. Did Burns do more than embody the general mind in his most popular works? Certainly not,—for it was to their *actual truth* that he was indebted for his fame. If there

Leigh Hunt has too many idiosyncrasies of genius, and has too much subtlety and refinement, for success as a popular writer. It is said, that a man who is but just in advance of his pupils, is the most effective teacher. It is the same with the author, who should not be too far beyond the mob, if he desires to sway their sympathies and opinions. The qualities of Leigh Hunt's mind are extremely rare, and seem strange and unintelligible to the mass of readers. There are many writers of these times, who have exhibited more power, both of thought and expression; but it would be difficult to name any one who has surpassed him in a delicate sense of the beautiful, and a general subtlety of apprehension. In a question of mere taste, or a description of natural scenery, or in characteristic details of men and manners, we can conceive nothing more delightful than the writings of Leigh Hunt: but he has many superiors in the fierce struggles of political controversy; and we have arrived at a period, when the public mind demands a strong and even coarse excitement. Even in literature itself, there is a correspondent leaning to the wild and turgid. Addison and Goldsmith would attract but little attention in such times as these. The mild essays of the *Spectator* would seem flat and insipid, and what publisher would make a liberal offer for the copyright of a one volume novel in the style of the *Vicar of Wakefield?*

When Leigh Hunt distinguished himself so much by his political writings in the *Examiner*, it was rather by the moral courage of his tone, contrasted with the general character of the *Legiti-*

were not responsive feelings in the bosoms of men in general, to whom would poetry be addressed? Poets would write only for Poets! But all men have human passions, and these are the poetry of life. The faculties, and emotions of the Poet differ from those of his fellow-creatures, in degree but not in kind. His pains and his pleasures are only more intense. He pants for sympathy, and to relieve his impassioned spirit, he is compelled to "wreak himself on expression!"

macy-ridden Press of that day, than by any intrinsic force of style. In fact, there was something even effeminate and fantastic in his manner, though his genuine love of truth and freedom, and the candour and sincerity and disinterestedness of his character, were obvious to the meanest and most malignant reader; though these noble qualities did not protect him from bitter and cowardly hostilities. In fact, the moral beauty of his character was the sharpest of all thorns in the sides of his opponents, some of whom seemed to think themselves justified in attacking his good name with the most infamous falsehoods for the sake of nullifying its influence. Considering all that Leigh Hunt has suffered in person and reputation for the good old cause, and that he was for a long time in advance of the rest of his party, it cannot be denied that the Whigs have treated him with signal ingratitude. There is no man living who has done so much to prepare the way for their return to power, and yet he has been wholly neglected in the ostentatious distribution of loaves and fishes to the men who have distinguished themselves by their writings. Even Tory authors, in every way below him, have had the preference. It is not easy to understand this gross injustice, unless it be, that our Whig governors, in their contemptible timidity, are fearful of being thought to favor their own friends; and thus, to avoid the imputation, turn their benefactors out of doors and heap honors on their foes. No liberal-minded person would advocate such party distinctions in literature, as should lead to the neglect of real merit; but here is a case in which a man of true genius is left to starve, though he has laboured half a life to forward a cause, which the legislators who have the power to honor and reward those writers who have benefitted mankind, consider to be the cause of truth and justice, and the dearest in which humanity is concerned; while authors of far less literary merit, and who have taken the opposite side, have been handsomely pensioned.

Nothing but Leigh Hunt's disinterested and undestructible love of truth, and a naturally lively imagination, could have preserved him from despondency or despair in the midst of his great and manifold afflictions; and it is truly delightful to observe, how he continues to the last to turn to the sunny side of all things. He is just as full of hope and trustfulness as ever, and he looks round upon nature and upon man with the same cordial sympathy and admiration that thrilled his heart in youth. This is true religion —true virtue—true wisdom.

Leigh Hunt seems to be quite aware, that his character as a politician is not precisely suited to the tone and temper of the times. He is far too mild and scrupulous and candid, and deals too much in generalities. He is too little of a party man.

Leigh Hunt's personal appearance is extremely prepossessing. His figure is light and elegant, and he has an air of genteel negligence about him, that is not common among literary men. He has a quick and sparkling eye, but his mouth is the most remarkable feature of his face; it has a character of great sensibility, and a kind of voluptuous refinement. If there is any thing objectionable in Hunt's personal manners and conversation, it consists in a slight tinge of foppery in both. Hazlitt is as opposite to him in these respects as possible. Hunt wears no neckcloth, but leaves his collar open *a la Byron*. His coxcombry, if such it be, has by no means a disagreeable effect; for his extreme politeness, his elegant manners and good humour would redeem a far greater foible.

NO. XIII.—KEAN.

This eminent actor seems to have suffered severely from his bodily infirmities during the last year or two of his life. His genius, however, had not lost all its original brightness, and in despite of a cloud of physical ills it shot forth occasional gleams, that were far more precious and delightful than the steadier

light of less gifted spirits. It will now scarcely admit of dispute that Kean, whatever might have been his personal failings, was the prince of modern tragedians. He had no rival near his throne. The John Kemble school is no longer the standard of Dramatic excellence. The school of Kean is the school of Shakespeare, or of nature, for these are almost convertible terms. The spirit of our great Bard in his moods of impetuous passion or profound tenderness was but ill represented by the deliberate and studied precision of John Kemble. The praise of fine taste and scholarship cannot be denied him, but he was rather a great rhetorician than a great actor. He consulted his head, when he should have trusted to his heart*.

The Dramatic revolution, of which Kean was the originator and the guide, is correspondent with that vast change in the state and tone of our literature, which has thrown many writers, once the idols of the public, into comparative obscurity or disrepute. The cautious elegance, the scholastic accuracy, the smart antithesis, the wit and terseness of the poets of the eighteenth century, are qualities of an inferior order in the estimation of the poets and critics of these times. There is a disposition to recur to the unaffected diction and the free and forcible nature of the Dramatic writers in the reign of Elizabeth, the true Augustan era of British literature. The poets of that period, if less correct than their successors, in certain points of style, were more correct in spirit. The bards of the present age, like the kings of our elder drama, are ambitious to cultivate in themselves

* Mrs. Siddons was a person of a different stamp, and was certainly superior to the rest of her family, eminent and accomplished as they were.

"Her soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

Perhaps she may be thought by some to have belonged to the same school; but if she did, she was so indisputably at the head of it, that she was not fettered by its rules. She was indeed a Tragic Queen, and could dare in her own person to make such glorious excursions into the realms of nature, as often startled the less adventurous spirits by whom she was surrounded.

a noble consciousness of their own powers, and a generous confidence in nature.

Such an actor as Kean, a genius so untrammelled by ordinary rules, so ready to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art, and to follow his author into the profoundest depths of human passion, would have gratified even Shakespeare himself. The mighty magician of the Drama would have been proud of a representative at once so daring and so faithful.

This great tragedian's last performance was in the part of *Othello*. His first appearance on the London stage was in that of *Shylock*. He performed it on the first night in an almost empty theatre. The town was for a considerable time much divided upon his merit. His style was too great a change from what the public had been accustomed to regard as a model in the person of John Kemble, to suffer them to appreciate it entirely and at once. The friends of the old school were naturally alarmed at so bold an innovator, and there was a fierce conflict amongst the critics as to the relative merits of the old favorite and the new one.

I will not attempt a minute critical analysis of the peculiar qualities of Kean's splendid genius as an actor, because it would be utterly beyond my power to do it justice; for those who have witnessed the performances of that powerful tragedian, would find even the ablest description of him vague, faint, and unsatisfactory, when compared with their own vivid recollections; and to attempt to represent him to others, would be almost as idle as to describe visible objects to the blind.

NO. XIV.—WORDSWORTH.

This writer, it must be confessed, is a little too exclusive in his taste, and occasionally carries an excellent principle to an extreme almost as pernicious as the error to which it is opposed. He is so thoroughly disgusted with the vapid common-places of the

imitators of the French School, that he thinks he cannot get too far from their models. He would rather speak like a clown than a Rosa Matilda. Of two evils he would choose what he thinks the least. But though there is a medium between the diction of the barn and the boudoir which he has sometimes missed, and in his eagerness to avoid an old and popular error has fallen into a new and a repulsive one, he is not to be characterized by his few failures, but by his general success. His expressions are plain, but not coarse. He maintains, and with abundant reason, that language need not be vulgar, because it is simple and unpretending. He has chosen humble subjects, and endeavoured to assimilate his language to the real language of men in ordinary life. He feels that nothing human can be too lowly for the purposes of poetry, and that natural thoughts are best expressed in natural language. His thoughts, though clear, are profound, and often most philosophical and original when they appear most trite and obvious to vulgar apprehension. It has been justly observed that there is often an internal power, with an absence of external ornament and pretension, in his poetry, which is not to be found in that of any other living writer; and this accounts for the indifference of the superficial reader, and the enthusiasm approaching almost to adoration, with which he is regarded by the careful and ingenuous student of the "art divine." Wordsworth is not likely to become a very popular poet, though portions of his writings will probably hereafter be more extensively known and be better appreciated by ordinary readers than they are at present. Many of his fine aphorisms, and some of his more obvious beauties of thought and style, will in time be familiarized to the public mind by repeated quotations. The great popularity of Scott as a poet, on his first appearance, was chiefly owing to the interest of his narratives. When the incidents became familiar, the verse in which they were embodied lost half its charm. He was not, like Wordsworth, the poet's poet. His metrical tales were never

highly esteemed by those who love poetry for its own sake. He was conscious of this, and spoke humbly of his own genius as a poet, but with a proud and just consciousness of his wondrous and unrivalled power as a novelist. Genuine poetry is never stale; every new perusal is accompanied with a fresh delight and an additional store of pleasant associations. Those, however, who can really enjoy the pure spirit of poetry, wholly unmixed with baser matter, form a very small class indeed. To make it popular without the aid of narrative, it is necessary to season it highly with glittering conceits, turgid truisms, and strong excitements.

The majority of critics estimate more highly the value of contemporary applause as an indication of future fame than general experience warrants. If sale alone were a criterion of the value of a work, Harriette Wilson's detestable Memoirs and many similar productions, would rank quite as high as any thing that has yet proceeded from the noblest pens. Before we look upon immediate applause as the slightest argument in favor of a writer's performances, there are many other circumstances that should be taken into consideration,—the subject—the author's style—and the character of the age. There are some subjects that in their own nature are so attractive to large classes of readers, that the feeblest handling cannot well abate their influence, particularly if they are brought forward at the proper season. There are other topics, on the contrary, that cannot be rendered widely popular by the greatest genius. Sometimes mere novelty of subject will do more for an author's temporary success than the greatest merit of style or thought. They who maintain that popularity is the test of merit should reconcile the vast success of Scott's poetry on its first publication, when he was looked upon as the English Homer, with the comparative neglect with which his metrical tales are now treated. If they were great poems on their first publication, they must be equally

meritorious now, though their popularity has wholly passed away. If any man were to publish at this day poems of similar character and equal merit, they would hardly run through a single edition. All the world at one time esteemed Scott a greater poet than Wordsworth, but who thinks so now? Opinions have changed, but the things remain the same.

There is a class of works for which an immediate but not permanent popularity is naturally expected, while there are others for which no popularity, but a slowly-coming though lasting fame, is all that is ever looked for or desired. If we glance over the records of literature, we shall meet with the titles of innumerable books that, in their brief day, were eagerly devoured by the whole reading world, but which are now utterly forgotten; or if occasionally met with and perused, are thrown away again with a deep feeling of disgust, and an expression of astonishment that they should ever have given satisfaction to a single human being. Great authors have rarely been popular, because they have gone beyond the age or beyond the general intellect. Bacon and Milton were never *popular*, and never will be. They are truly interesting only to thinkers and men of imagination, and these form the fit audience though few. On the authority of the critics the multitude have faith in these gods of intellect. They blindly worship them from a sense of duty, and not from any impulse of affection. The history of literature furnishes us with comparatively so few instances of contemporary popularity being succeeded by a permanent fame, and so many striking cases of a sudden blaze of success being as suddenly extinguished, and of neglected merit forcing its way slowly into lasting distinction, that we have always thought it highly unphilosophical to draw any positive conclusions from the public reception of new works.

Wordsworth is not an Epic poet, nor has he the Dramatic faculty. This is the reason why he has in some respects failed in his "Excursion," which is neither an Epic nor a Dramatic

poem, but a mere record of the moods of his own mind. The dramatis personæ are shadows. The dialogue is sustained entirely by one person, and that person is the author. The poem is in fact an eloquent soliloquy. It is curious that in point of style, one portion of Wordsworth's works forms a strange contrast to the rest. Though in his Lyrical Ballads he affects a quaker-like plainness and humility, in his poems of a metaphysical or of a contemplative character there is a solemn and sustained elevation both of style and sentiment. He adapts his manner to his subject. He may be called both a philosophical and a pastoral poet. His characteristics are profound thought and a passionate love of nature.

We read the works of Wordsworth with a calm delight, and a personal veneration for the author. There is something so exquisitely pure and pastoral in all that we hear of his daily life, that he realizes our most ideal conception of the poetical character. He lives in serene and thoughtful gladness, amidst groves, and lakes, and mountains, and seems as intimately associated with nature as the birds that charm him with their songs. He pays, indeed, an occasional visit to the crowded city, but hurries eagerly back again to his native haunts. There is the same avoidance of all contact with artificial life, in his personal habits as in his poetry. There is an Arcadian simplicity and quietude in both.

NO. XV.—REV. J. WOLFE.

[*Author of the Lines on the Burial of Sir John Moore.*]

Mr. Wolfe seems to have been one of that class of authors who owe all their fame to a single happy thought—the chance inspiration of an hour. He was the writer of one of the most beautiful little poems in the language, and yet he was not a

poet. That is to say, poetry was not the element in which he lived, and breathed, and had his being. He had not by nature the true temperament. All men have brief and occasional visitations of fancy and feeling, of more or less brightness and intensity, by which they are raised above the prosaic mediocrity of their daily life; and when a man possesses a talent for versification, he may happen, in some auspicious moment, after a thousand failures, to embody his casual inspiration, with extraordinary success. But one or two good passages will not make a fine poem, nor one or two poetical thoughts, a true poet. Pomfret, who was the most prosaic man that ever lived, and whose verses are generally detestable, contrived to stumble one agreeable summer morning upon a pleasing subject, and albeit unused to the poetical mood, he treated it in a pleasing manner. He wore laurels all his life for this single effort; and even long after his natural death his poetical existence was highly reputable. Southey, in his Specimens of the English Poets, has told us that Pomfret's *Choice* is the most popular poem in the language. We doubt the fact; and suspect that the poem has been little read for the last fifty years: but still the notice of it by Johnson and by Southey, and the sale which the poem once obtained, will serve to show that a prosaic person may sometimes arrive at considerable distinction by a single poetic fit of very short duration. Perhaps if Pomfret had lived a whole century longer, and had written verses daily, he would have continued, what he always was, with one solitary exception, a dull manufacturer of rhyming prose. If he had never written any other verses than the *Choice*, the real barrenness of his mind would have remained a secret to the public. All his subsequent attempts were absolutely suicidal. Lady Anne Barnard, wrote one of the most exquisite ballads in the world—*Auld Robin Gray*, and perhaps, it is by no means a subject of regret that she never attempted to write another. As it was, she somewhat risked her fame, by the publication of

a continuation or second part, which, as Mr. Dyce observes, is very inferior to the original tale, and greatly injures its effect. If Sir Egerton Brydges had written no other verses than his beautiful Sonnet on *Echo and Silence*, (according to Southey, the most imaginative poem in any language,) how far higher he would have stood in general estimation as a poet than he now does. He soon broke the charm. He seemed determined to convince his admirers that his inspiration was momentary and fortuitous. He devoted a long life to an assiduous courtship of the Muse, but she never gave him another smile. If he had possessed that rarest of all attainments—self-knowledge, he would have laid by his pen from that happy hour; for one good poem is better than a thousand bad ones. Mr. Carlyle has told us, that booksellers would often get more for their money if they got less: that is, if they were to pay for quality instead of quantity. Authors should take the same view of the means of acquiring fame, and recollect that one little volume of real merit, shorn of all excrescences, and condensed into power, is more profitable in the end, than a cart-load of diffuser matter that is "very tolerable, and not to be endured."

Mr. Wolfe, like many other men before him, fell into the unhappy mistake of doing more than enough. He made one lucky hit, and then by his subsequent failures proved how much more he was indebted to fortune than to genius. If he had secreted or destroyed every thing that he had ever written except the Lines on the Burial of Sir John Moore, the public would have looked upon him as one of the best poets of the time, and the complimentary critics would have lamented that so noble a genius should have been so sparing of its exertions. It was the flattering complaints of their idleness, that tempted Campbell to perpetrate his *Theodric*, and Rogers to write his *Italy*. And Mr. Wolfe, who had produced an ode that was admired by Lord Byron as one of the finest in the language, and that became at

once a favorite with all classes of people, was so unfortunate as to write and so imprudent as to preserve a variety of other pieces, which, comparatively speaking, are very little known, and which those who have read once have no desire to read again. There are some blank-verse compositions in the volume of his Remains that it was perfectly inhuman of his executors to publish.

Blank-verse is one of the most striking tests of a poet's genius. It is the noblest measure in the language. It is a magnificent instrument that is not to be commanded by a feeble hand. The player's strength or weakness is instantly exhibited. There are certain forms of rhymed verse that are happily adapted to conceal a penury of thought, but blank-verse seems to lay bare the writer's intellect. If it be not supported with the utmost energy and skill, it is really what Johnson called it, crippled prose, or verse only to the eye.

NO. XVI.—REV. JOHN MOULTRIE.

Mr. Moultrie's name is probably not very familiar to the public; but his fellow-students at Eton College, some twenty years ago, can hardly have forgotten his promise of future eminence; and many of the readers of the *Etonian* have admired the productions of his youth, though they knew not from whose hand they came. Mr. Moultrie was so much distinguished in his own circle by his early effusions, and these were so flatteringly spoken of by the public press, that the long silence of his Muse is a circumstance not unworthy of particular notice. It appears that on entering into wedlock, and assuming the sacerdotal garment, he thought it inconsistent with his character and position to devote any portion of his time to the favorite amusement of his earlier years. He seems latterly to have changed his opinion on this subject.

There is not a single line of preface to his volume of poems; and, indeed, if he had written one, it would probably have been a work of mere supererogation, for few poets have permitted their muse to be more confidential and communicative. He cordially shakes hands with the public, and at once ushers that many-headed personage into his domestic circle, who becomes perfectly intimate not only with the host himself, but with his wife and children, and his whole circle of friends and associates. He is really a much greater egotist in verse than Byron himself, but his egotism is very different in character from that of the stern and haughty *Harold*. It is more like that of Southey, and seems to proceed from a certain noble simplicity and an overflowing kindliness of nature. None but a man who gives others credit for similar feelings could so boldly reveal his own;—his personal and domestic references are a compliment to the reader's heart.

Mr. Moultrie in his early poems imitated Lord Byron, who was then in the meridian of his glory. He has since changed his models, and his style is now a mixture of Wordsworth and Southey. This will perhaps partly account for a degree of strength and condensation in his first effusions that we do not meet with in the generality of his later pieces. He now aims at simplicity, which is no doubt a high excellence in poetry when combined with great power; but the simplicity even of Wordsworth and Southey is mawkish or ridiculous whenever their inspiration fails them. In their happier passages it has an effect that cannot be too highly appreciated, but their warmest admirers will hardly venture to deny that many of the pages of those great poets are sadly deficient in force and elevation. Extreme simplicity of style in poetical composition requires great originality and energy of thought to preserve it from poverty and degradation. We should be as sorry if Thomas Moore were to cast away his gems and flowers, and to aim at the bare

simplicity of Wordsworth, as if, on the other hand, the latter poet were to deck his muse in the rainbow tints of Lalla Rookh. We can no more object to the silks and jewels of a fashionable lady than to the nakedness of a statue. There are some orders of poetry that absolutely require ornament, as there are others that are best without it. Mr. Moultrie's genius is not in any respect like that of Moore; on the contrary it is characterized by a chastity and serenity that are more akin to Wordsworth's; but he has not sufficient breadth and force of mind to give effect to a style that is apt to border on humility. Wordsworth is a dangerous model for a feeble thinker. Poets should contrive to let their style be in keeping with the character of their genius. The blank-verse of Milton was a noble and appropriate instrument in the hands of that mighty master; but the graceful and tender Goldsmith would have turned it to poor account. Mr. Moultrie is a man of genius, but he cannot write with power in the style of Wordsworth. He is a *true* poet, though not a *great* one; and we are inclined to fancy that if he had continued with more zeal and regularity his courtship to the Muse, he might have taken a much higher place amongst the poets of the present day. He has not quite fulfilled the promise of his spring; but he is yet in the summer of his intellect, and in due season he may hereafter present us with a glorious harvest. Though his mind has long lain fallow, he may soon perhaps make up for past neglect. But even if his volume be read without reference to the past or the future, it is impossible to withhold our admiration. Find what fault we may with it, the sternest and coldest critic must at once acknowledge the presence of real genius; and no modern book more unequivocally evinces the purity and earnestness of the author's character as a man.

There is a freshness of fancy, a buoyancy of spirit, and an air of strength and facility in his first effusions, that make ample amends for a few errors of judgment that are naturally enough

expected in a young and inexperienced writer. These errors are not discoverable in the works of his middle age; but, unhappily, in wrenching away the weeds from his mind's domain, many of the sweetest flowers, steeped in the morning dews of poetry, have vanished with them. It would seem that it is necessary for a poet to continue an unceasing cultivation of his powers, and to cherish, as much as possible, all imaginative associations. Mr. Moultrie had so long intermitted his addresses to the Muse, that they had become comparatively strangers to each other. A fair being of flesh and blood had monopolized his attentions. No youthful lover could testify more devotion to the maiden mistress of his heart than our poet has shown towards his wife. This amounts to a degree of amiable uxoriousness that would have puzzled Byron. A very large proportion of the poems in this volume seem to have been inspired by conjugal affection: but the author of Don Juan thinks that a husband cannot be a lover.

> "Think you if Laura had been Petrarch's wife
> He would have written sonnets all his life!"

But Mr. Moultrie has not only shown us that a poet may be at once a husband and a lover, he has also proved how a finer imagination may increase and elevate a parent's pleasures. A severe domestic affliction threw Mr. Moultrie upon his mental resources, and he soon discovered that poetry had charms that could beguile him of his sorrows. His melodious sighs eased the weight upon his heart. "Most poets," says Shelley,

> "Are cradled into poetry by wrong;
> *They learn in suffering what they teach in song.*"

Mr. Moultrie's earlier poems are remarkable for that vivacity and enthusiasm, which are characteristic of youthful genius in its exulting consciousness of power. They breathe too the spirit of generous admiration, which leads a young poet to imitate the

peculiarities of maturer minds. Byron was at that period in the meridian of his fame, and Mr. Moultrie soon caught his tone and manner. His youthful performances are amongst the best imitations of the noble poet that have yet appeared.

Mr. Moultrie's intellectual character has undergone a very striking change. He is no longer gay and buoyant, but a quiet bliss, wholly unallied to mirth and jollity, has taken possession of his heart. A serene religious thoughtfulness has spread its silent mist over the radiant colours of his youthful fancy, and the tumultuous tide of early passion has lost its ruder force, and gradually wound its way into the calmer and deeper channel of domestic love. No poet of the present day has drawn more of his inspiration from his household deities. His own sacred hearth is to him the Muse's altar. He is essentially the poet of domestic life. He is as ignorant of the great world as a child; but he knows and cultivates his own heart, and feels that he has "riches fineless" in his happy human nest. He sings like a bird, to cheer the affectionate mother of his little brood. It is chiefly in obedience to her urgent and repeated solicitations, that he has latterly been so lavish of his song. In the change that has come over the spirit of our poet, it was not to be expected that he would continue to worship his earlier idols. As was said before, Byron has made way for Wordsworth. In Mr. Moultrie's later productions, there is not a single line that reminds us of the author of Childe Harold; but it is evident. that Wordsworth's pure fancy and calm philosophy have now an ever-present influence upon his genius. The change is a fortunate one, and calls for special congratulation. There is an appearance of less force in Mr. Moultrie's later productions, but perhaps there is a greater depth of thought in them. At all events, there is no question that they are very elegant and refined effusions, and do honor to the head and the heart of the author. The subjects are generally of a nature to call forth, in

the happiest manner, the peculiar powers of Mr. Moultrie's genius. He is most at home in the tender and pathetic, and in the illustration of the domestic affections.

Note.—These *Miniature Outlines* are merely a collection of brief notices written for the editorial department of a literary journal. They are very incomplete, and are perhaps open to the charge of dogmatism and pretension, coming as they now do from an individual author. As editorial criticisms a certain air of assumption and decision was in some degree excusable. There are many admirable writers, of whom no mention is here made, but who ought to have found a place in this collection, had it been intended as a full account of the literati of the day.

THE PAST YEAR.

Departed Year! now sunk to rest
On dark oblivion's dreamless breast;—
Lost offspring of mysterious Time!
What mortal crowds of every clime,
In youth and infancy and age
That 'companied thy pilgrimage,
With thee beyond the limits lie
That mock the keenest human eye!
What eager thoughts and golden schemes,
And prospects fair and flattering dreams,
Vanished before the morning light
That scared thy latest living night!
What change of actors and of scene
Within thy narrow span hath been!
And yet though brief thy path, too long
It seemed to those in Life's wild throng,
Who looked towards thy closed career
With hopes now withered on thy bier!

TEN YEARS AND MORE.

TO ———

I.

Ten years and more—ten years and more,
Have glided swiftly by,
Since first upon our native shore
We felt the social tie,
And little thought at fate's command
To meet upon this distant land.

II.

Ten years and more—ten years and more!—
A cloud is on my heart!
For like the knell of pleasures o'er
When Life's best dreams depart,
These words from drear Oblivion's pall
Dim throngs of shrouded hopes recall.

III.

Ten years and more—ten years and more!—
These breathings of the past—
These murmurs on Time's twilight shore
Far heard o'er 'memory's waste,'
Arrest awhile the dreaming ear
Like sounds that home-sick wanderers hear.

IV.

Ten years and more !—ten years and more !—
With sad reverted gaze
I mark the long road travelled o'er
In anguish and amaze !
How many a fearful path was crost !
How many a dear companion lost !

V.

Ten years and more !—ten years and more
Have all been overcast ;
And yet 'tis idle to deplore
The darkness of the past ;
'Twere better that my soul should hail
The stars that pierce the future's veil.

STANZAS,

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG OFFICER IN INDIA.

Oh ! dear were the beautiful dreams of his youth,
When young Hope was deemed the fair daughter of Truth !
The bright star of glory had led him astray
And shed its first glimmer of light on his way !

But life's sun is sunk, from the scene it hath passed,
And the bright tints of morn are but shadows at last.
The victim of sickness, dread scourge of the land,
He sleeps the last sleep on a far foreign strand !

SONG.

I.

O'ER the lake's smiling surface when kissed by the moon—
On the green hills at sunrise—in still woods at noon—
In isles fairy-haunted—in caves on the shore—
Hath the poet oft heard mystic music before.

II.

But Oh, never, Oh, never have tones such as thine—
So entrancing and dream-like—so truly divine—
Ever breathed in his ear, or with magical art
So bewildered his spirit, or melted his heart!

III.

If the fragrance of spring when the dew's on the ground,
And the fair hues of flowers, were turned into sound—
If the rich glow of sunset—the gay tints of morn,
Could speak a sweet language to scenes they adorn—

IV.

If the looks of the lovely—if virtue and worth—
And all that is brightest and best on the earth—
Were but made in one musical spell to combine,
It would seem, dear Enchantress, an echo of thine!

SHYLOCK.

It is strange how rarely the character of *Shylock* has been justly represented on the stage. I have seen it performed by many respectable actors, but Kean was the only one who personated the Jew with judgment and fidelity;—other actors seemed to forget that *Shylock* is supposed to have lived in a time and country in which his tribe were bitterly persecuted, and kept in a state of subjection and alarm. The Jews were regarded as a species of moral lepers, with whom it was dangerous and disgraceful to associate. *Shylock* himself repeatedly avows, that he had been exposed to the most intolerable insults from the Christians, and until the incident of the bond, which showed more ingenuity than boldness, he does not appear to have once dared to retaliate. Had he attempted to take the law into his own hands, he would have been crushed like some obnoxious animal. His tribe were despised and defenceless outcasts. The Christians thought it no sin to treat them as pariahs. *Antonio*—

> "A kinder gentleman walks not the earth"—

had spit upon *Shylock's* beard and called him dog; yet he applies to him in his necessities without a moment's hesitation, as if nothing likely to excite the active hostility of a Jew had occurred between them. He even replies to *Shylock*, when he reminds him of these indignities,

> "I am as like to call thee so again,
> To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too."

He then continues the pecuniary negociation, and when *Shylock* offers him the money, and says he will take "no doit of usance," but merely stipulate for the bond in "a merry sport," this un-

natural and apparently slave-like courtesy raises neither surprize nor suspicion in *Antonio's* mind. Yet the Merchant of Venice must have been sufficiently familiar with the character and condition of *Shylock's* tribe. It is evident that the Jews were looked upon as a people so thoroughly humiliated, that no injury or insult from a Christian was likely to raise in their breasts so noble a feeling as that of indignation. If *Shylock* had been bold and arrogant in his general bearing, the circumstance would have been particularly noticed by the Christians, and his "merry bond" would have been suspected. A consciousness of the supreme contempt in which the Christians held his countrymen, is the main cause of the spleen and bitterness of *Shylock's* heart. Even *Antonio*, entirely forgot his own generous nature when he came in contact with an Israelite. Shylock justly complains of him:

"He hath disgraced me, and hindered me of half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated my enemies, and what's his reason? —*I am a Jew?*"

Shakespeare borrowed the double ground-work of the *Merchant of Venice* chiefly from old Italian novels*, but he was doubtless

* He appears to have taken the incidents of this play from different sources, and not exclusively from Italian works. At all events they are to be found in a variety of publications, and in more than one language. Dr. Johnson says that the leading facts are taken from a story in the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, a novelist who wrote in 1378. The story was published in English. A vast number of Italian novels were translated into English in Shakespeare's time, and he appears to have made a very free and a very admirable use of them. Warton (in his Observations on Spenser) gives a fragment of an old English Ballad from which he thinks Shakespeare took the circumstance of the bond, and the Ballad is reprinted entire in the *Connoisseur*. It is curious that in the Life of Pope Sixtus V. translated from the Italian of Gregorio Leti by Mr. Farnworth, there is a similar story with the chief circumstance reversed, for it is the Christian who insists upon the forfeit pound of flesh from the Jew. The story, with variations, is to be found perhaps in almost every part of the world. Sir Thomas Monro, when an Ensign at Tanjore, sent Mr. Malone a similar story of a Jew and a Musalman, translated from an old and imperfect Persian manuscript.

more or less influenced in the filling up and finishing of his sketch of the character of the Jew by a regard to the prejudices of an English audience of that period. If he had made him bold, blustering, and independent, the poet's contemporaries would have thought the character unnatural. Such a portrait would have been unpopular even in a much later day.

It was in vain that Cumberland pourtrayed the character of *Abraham Abrahams* in the *Observer*, and wrote the play of *The Benevolent Jew*. Neither *Sheva* nor *Abraham Abrahams* has made any impression on the minds of the Christians, who still contemplate with a malicious triumph the revengeful but unfortunate *Shylock*, who is at least as much "sinned against as sinning." Kean always remembered *Shylock's* true condition as the member of a feeble and despised community, and the habits which long subjection to the "proud man's contumely" engenders in the noblest natures. It is worthy of particular notice, that *Shylock* never ventures to fling back those abusive epithets which sting his own heart to madness. When the Christians spit upon him and call him "cut throat dog," he simply reasons and remonstrates with them on their gross injustice, and hazards no expression that would be likely to arouse their serious vengeance. His invectives are more general than theirs, and less personally offensive. In the pursuit of his own deep revenge, he takes an indirect and insidious course, and endeavours to entrap an enemy too powerful to combat openly. When he thinks he has him in his toils, he begins to assume a somewhat more confident tone and a bolder bearing, which gradually increase as *Antonio's* difficulties become more inextricable, and the legal advantages over him appear more decided. It is many years since I saw Kean in *Shylock*, but I have still a lively recollection of the truth of keeping which he displayed throughout. The Jew's voice and manner grew gradually firmer and more daring as he appeared to approach the consummation of his desires, but he never hazarded a gratuitous

provocation, and he never *stormed*. He seemed to think his whole object included in the power of his bond. He looked and spoke as if he felt that were he to lose that, he would lose every thing, and sink again into comparative insignificance and contempt. When *Gratiano* throws out a series of violent invectives, and exclaims,

> "O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!"

Shylock contents himself with the cool reply :

> "Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond
> Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud ;
> Repair thy wit good youth, or it will fall
> To cureless ruin. *I stand here for law.*"

The generality of actors, however, mistake the Jew's temperament and manner. They make him a passionate and blustering bully ; whereas he was sullen, cautious, and deliberate. He was not continually hurried away by gusts of passion, nor was it any sudden and unlooked for provocation that had stirred up the deepest and worst parts of his nature. He was not inebriated with rage. He had long brooded over the degradation of his tribe and his own personal wrongs.

> "For sufferance is the badge of all his tribe."

Had he been allowed the opportunity to "wreak his soul upon expression," and pour on the heads of the Christians as many showers of scalding curses as he had received upon his own, his passion would have lost much of its intensity and virulence. Perfect freedom of speech would have operated like a safety-valve. But bearing as he did "the pelting of the pitiless storm" of the Christian's hatred, without daring to return it, his passions gained force by concealment and concentration. It was rarely that the tempest in his heart broke out in thunder.

The original force of his nature, and this conventional restraint, combined to give a unity and depth to his character, that were

rather indicated by the steadiness of his purpose than by any extravagance of language or of manner. Profound and powerful minds do not give way to frequent ebullitions of idle rage. To scold and rave is the part of a woman or a bully. Deep waters are still. There is a self-possession in the Jew that is almost sublime. Amidst a host of powerful and malignant enemies, and with every disadvantage of position, he is so far from being bewildered by his emotions, or thrown off his guard, that he seems to say just so much and no more, in the way of self-defence and retaliation, as is consistent with his personal safety and the furtherance of his object. Though he ventures upon sundry bitter taunts and sneers, they are only of such a character as his enemies from a consciousness of superior power might be supposed to tolerate. He does not call the Christians dogs, or spit and spurn at them, as they do at him.

The character of *Shylock* is by no means complicated, or difficult of apprehension, and it is accordingly the more surprising that it should be so often erroneously represented on the stage. Its traits are broad and simple. The single passion of revenge swallows up every other, even that of avarice. It is not, however, a personal revenge alone, for he has a sympathy for his injured and insulted countrymen which in a Christian would be deemed a virtue. He has "a lodged hate" against *Antonio*, not only because he has "thwarted his bargains," but also because he is one of those who have "*scorned his nation.*"

Kean's *Shylock* was remarkable for an air of suppression and reserve. The few occasional bursts of passion seemed to escape from an habitual restraint. They were irrepressible; not free or voluntary. The effect was thus greatly heightened. The *Shylock* of other actors appeared to have no concealments and no self-control.

In the way in which the part is usually performed, there is often the strongest contrast between the text and the action. The

latter has the air of galvanism; for the life is wanting. Wild and passionate movements are incongruously associated with sly sneers and deliberate scorn.

Abstracting our minds from Christian prejudices, we cannot help sympathizing, in some degree, with Shakespeare's Jew; but the Jew, as he is generally represented on the stage, seems so well able to take his own part and to brow-beat his enemies that he is too powerful to be pitied. The Christians themselves have the tables turned upon them. They are the persecuted party. There is also too much of the demon in the acted Jew. If *Shylock* hates *Antonio* "*for that he is a Christian,*" the Christians hate *Shylock* because he is a Jew, and not merely on account of his defective moral qualities as a man. A respectable Jewish audience would not regard *Shylock* with the horror that thrills a Christian audience. They would not only sympathize in his sufferings, but admire his indomitable character and his unanswerable logic. A Christian of the same character, placed under similar circumstances, would receive the same indulgence from people of his own faith. If *Shylock* is somewhat too fierce and unforgiving, his countrymen would recollect that his bosom is a volcano that has laboured long and fiercely, not only with the internal fire enkindled by his own wrongs, but with the intolerable, and at last irrepressible, sense of the injuries and indignities heaped upon " his sacred nation."

The conclusion of the play is unsatisfactory. We are pained to see a powerful and deeply injured spirit so completely thwarted and subdued by a mere quibble, and are shocked at the absurd and unnecessary insult of insisting (as a part of his punishment too!) "that he do presently become a Christian!" *Shylock's* immediate consent to this humiliating demand, and his casting off the religion of his ancestors, like an old coat, at a single jerk, appears inconsistent with the force and inflexibility of his character. It is at all events difficult to conceive the glory or utility of making a no-

minal convert to Christianity by taking advantage of a legal quirk, and "convincing a man against his will" by the threatened alternative of sundry pains and penalties. The Jew, however, could not have turned into a real Christian, and scarcely into a hypocrite. It was more easy for *Falstaff* to give reasons upon compulsion, than for *Shylock* to give faith.

SONNET—TO A LADY SINGING.

O! BREATHE, impassioned songstress, once again,
That soul-entrancing air! Responsive tears
Attest thy power. Thy gentle voice appears
Like sounds of summer's eve, or some sweet strain
That haunts the wanderer's visionary brain
When home's fond memories rise, and vanished years,
That Time's dim twilight mystery endears,
Return, like shadows o'er the trembling main
Beneath the half-veiled moon. Then waken still
Those notes with more than mortal music fraught—
Celestial harmonies! Each echo seems
A charm from heaven—a spell divinely wrought
To bare the curtained past, and every ill
That clouds the heart, to cheer with holy dreams.

WAR SONG.

I.

Hail to the Brave ! and hail the Land
Where Freedom's dauntless guardians stand,
An honored race, a glorious band,
Or prompt to strike, or proud to die,—
Prepared for death or liberty !

II.

How hallowed is the Patriot's grave,
Who 'neath the banners Freemen wave,
With ready hand and bosom brave,
Hath fought and died as heroes die,
In battle and for liberty !

III.

How dear his proud immortal name
To Virtue, Liberty, and Fame !
Its magic sound the Land shall claim
For watch-word and for battle-cry
To lead the brave to victory !

IV.

Oh ! who that patriot honor warms,
When sound the trumpet's wild alarms,
But nobly burns for deeds of arms,
To force his country's foe to fly—
To strike for death or liberty !

V.

The Victor's brow may proudly shine,
While Beauty's hands the wreath entwine,
But, Oh ! his country's heart's a shrine
For him who greatly dares to die,
For glory and for liberty !

BALLOONS.

I HAVE read that the greatest height to which any balloon has ever ascended is twenty-three thousand, one hundred feet, which is the elevation reached by Guy Lussac in 1804. This is greatly above the highest mountains in the world, excepting the extreme peak of one of the Himmalayahs, which is twenty-eight thousand feet high. Man, winged only by his intellectual faculties, has out-soared the most ambitious of the feathered tribe. The highest flight of the Condor, is said to be about twenty thousand feet above the level of the sea.

I recollect looking down from the top of the monument on Fish-street hill, and wondering at the littleness of man and beast. The Duke of Wellington happened to be passing at the very moment, and the hero looked any thing but heroic. It was a vision of Lilliput. What a sight it would have been for the sarcastic Swift, had he ascended in a balloon, and looked down upon this " dim spot, which men call earth." The proud rhodomontade of Richard the third—

> " But I was born so high !—
> Our eyrie buildeth in the cedar's top,
> And dallies with the wind and scorns the sun"—

must seem a very modest metaphor to our modern voyagers through the sky. Probably to their minds, even the gallant Hotspur's aspirations are tamely reasonable—

> " By heaven, methinks, it were an easy leap,
> To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon !"

What a creature of circumstance is man ! His opinions are as variable as the colours of the chameleon, and change with every change of position. " The great globe itself, with all that it inherits," seems to sink into insignificance if we are lifted but a

mile from it. To follow up the illustration from Swift's admirable satire, how pitifully insignificant was a man six feet high in the land of Brobdignag. As we read of his standing upon the uplifted hands of a child, we do not wonder at the people splitting their sides with laughter when Gulliver, attempting to look big, drew his sword, and talked of his wounded honor. Gulliver's nice sense of his own moral dignity, in such a situation, seems a mockery of man; and yet thought and passion are not matters of length and breadth. What a world of gigantic and god-like imaginings reside in that little globe, the human skull; and yet within its diminutive limits, there is " ample room, and verge enough for more." The " thoughts that wander through eternity" had spacious cradles in the head of Milton.

The very idea of the seat in the car makes one giddy. It looks awfully open and insecure. An inexperienced aeronaut would hardly dare to look towards the earth, " lest the deficient sight topple down headlong."

There is something inexpressibly sublime in the objects presented to the imagination in these glorious excursions into the upper regions. I recollect reading somewhere an account of an aërial ascent, in which, though the aeronaut left the earth considerably after sunset, the sun again became visible to him as he rose high into the air. The solitary wanderer must have felt a vivid consciousness that he had left the exterior surface of this earthly globe, and was sailing through illimitable realms. What mighty thoughts would have passed through the brain of Milton, had the sublime bard been placed in such a position. The experiments that have been made with small birds, such as linnets and pigeons, let loose from the parachute at a dreadful height, are extremely interesting. They have generally trembled and fluttered awhile on the edge of the machine, then timidly plunged into the vast ocean of air, and at last, as if bewildered at the endless prospect of cloud upon cloud, have returned to the balloon.

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

I.

Oh! sweet departed Saint!
If aught of earth could reach thine ear,
Love's fevered sigh, and sorrow's ceaseless plaint,
Might wake thy tenderest tear!

II.

Not that my saddened heart
Would stain thee now with kindred woe,
Or bid thy spirit's sinless dreams impart
A less ethereal glow!

III.

But, still, the thought of pain,
That we, so true, shall meet no more,
Hath agonized a breast whose griefs disdain
All that would peace restore!

IV.

Oh! desolate and cold!
Hope's lingering beam is quenched at last,—
The trusting mind futurity controlled
Now dwells but on the *past!*

V.

O'er this deserted scene,
Where'er my wandering eye may turn,
Rise long-remembered spots where thou hast been,
But never shalt return!

VI.

The fragrant noon-tide grove
The moon-light's lone and silent bowers,
The sweet haunts once of ecstacy and love,
But breathe of happier hours !

VII.

I seek thine early tomb
With sad and unavailing tears,
While echo wakes amid the cheerless gloom,
The voice of other years !

SONNET—A STORM.

(WRITTEN IN INDIA.)

The strife is hushed,—yet lingering shadows lower
Around the rising sun ! The distant hill
Lies hid in mist,—the tempest-swollen rill
O'erflows the vale,—this antique, hoary tower
Austerely frowns above the stricken bower,
Where droops the wet-winged minah, cold and still.
Yon prostrate tree the gazer's breast doth fill
With thoughts of death's inevitable hour.
The mighty spirit of the midnight storm
Passed where for ages rose the greenwood's pride,
And what availed its glory ? Its vast form,
Stretched on the groaning earth, but serves to hide
The serpent's dwelling ; and decay's dull worm
Soon in its mouldering bosom shall abide !

MASSINGER.

WHEN we reflect upon the personal history of Massinger, and the sad obscurity of his career, it is gratifying to observe that the justice which was refused to him in his life-time, and for more than a century after, has been awarded to him in the present age. His name and his writings are at this day familiar to every student of English Literature, though when Johnson wrote his Lives of the Poets, he knew so little of one of our greatest dramatic authors, that he seems to have been ignorant that the *Fair Penitent* of Rowe was a plagiarism from the *Fatal Dowry* of Massinger. It is now well-known that Rowe had prepared an edition of the entire works of Massinger, of whose genius, at that period so rarely recognized, he appears to have been a warm admirer. When, however, his own avarice of distinction led him to covet the gold and jewels that adorned his idol, he determined to leave him in that obscurity from which alone he could hope for the concealment of his own sacrilegious theft. About the middle of the seventeenth century appeared an edition of Massinger prepared by Coxeter. This was an attempt, but a very unsuccessful one, to correct the numerous blunders of the old editions. It was followed soon after by an equally incorrect edition published by Mr. Davies, and to this succeeded that of Mason. None, however, of these reprints did any essential service to the poet's reputation, and it was not till Mr. Gifford produced his very careful and excellent edition in 1805, that the works of Massinger were generally read and justly appreciated. The only drawback from the gratification that every student of English poetry has received from this edition, is the excessive arrogance

and acrimony which the editor has displayed in his very numerous notices of the errors of his predecessors. He never makes a silent correction, when he has an opportunity of expressing his malignant triumph over the ruin of another's fame. He seems to speak with the bitterness of personal hatred of men whom he never saw, or who were at rest in the grave before he himself was in his cradle. This virulence and ferocity introduced into questions of no moral consequence, not only interferes materially with the more pleasurable and peaceful emotions which the contemplation of the poet's beauties is calculated to excite, but leads us to call in question even the personal character of the editor, and makes us less disposed than we otherwise should be, to recognise the indications of his laborious care and his critical acumen. Mr. Gifford is guilty of another, but a more amiable and more common fault—a highly exaggerated estimate of the genius of the poet on whom he comments. There is no question that Massinger was a most distinguished ornament of what is called the age of Elizabeth, which, in reference to the History of our Literature, is generally made to include the reign of James the first. But I cannot agree with Gifford, that Massinger is, in any one respect that has relation to the higher qualities of genius, a rival of the immortal Shakespeare, or that his superiority to all his other contemporaries is quite so decided as he would have us think. Some commendatory verses, addressed to Massinger by a friend, ought to have suggested to Mr. Gifford the propriety of praising his favorite poet with somewhat more reserve. The following passage in these verses reminds me of a correspondent sentiment in Pope*.

"Yet whoso e'er beyond desert commends,
Errs more by much than he that reprehends;
For praise misplaced, and honor set upon
A worthless subject, is detraction."

* Praise undeserved is censure in disguise.—*Pope.*

It is but fair to presume from the following compliment, (a very awkward one if not well founded,) that Massinger did not himself pretend to an equality with the greatest of his contemporaries.

"You are not, I assure
Myself, envious, but you can endure
To hear their praise, whose worth long since was known,
And justly too preferred before your own;
I know, you'd take it for an injury
(And 'tis a well becoming modesty,)
To be paralleled with Beaumont, or to hear
Your name by some too partial friend writ near
Unequalled Jonson; being men whose fire
At distance and with reverence you admire,
Do so, and you shall find your gain will be
Much more, by yielding them priority,
Than with a certainty of loss, to hold
A foolish competition: 'tis too bold
A task, and to be shunned; nor shall my praise
With too much weight, ruin what it would raise."

In fact, Massinger's modesty is placed beyond a doubt by the fact, that the same poetical friend subsequently wrote a similar address to him, in which he says, somewhat inconsistently with his first epistle:—

"You remember how you chid me, when
I ranked you equal with those glorious men,
Beaumont and Fletcher * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
I did but justice when I placed you so."

Perhaps after all, Mr. Gifford's fault was not so much an undue partiality as defective judgment. For though an acute and clever critic within a certain limit, and endowed with a quick sense of the lesser proprieties, the minor morals of literature, he had not a true relish of poetical excellence of the highest order. He would have written a better essay on Pope than on Shakespeare. As a critic he was of the school of Johnson, who wrote so much more ably on Dryden than on Milton. He was readier at the

discovery of slight errors than of great beauties. He was a kind of legal critic, who deemed it more his business and found it a more congenial task to discover a flaw or condemn an infraction of certain arbitrary laws, than to recognize and applaud those noble but irregular virtues that rise above them. He had evidently no sympathy for those poets

"Who snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

When he criticised the poetry of Shelley, he could discover not a single indication of sense or genius in the rich and wild imaginings of that daring genius. To him it was a midnight chaos, fitfully illumined by unwholesome meteors—a darkness visible, that served only to discover dismal vapours and demoniac phantoms. A critic of this sort is precisely the kind of person to prefer Massinger to Shakespeare. Mr. Monk Mason had remarked the general harmony of the former's versification, which he pronounced superior to that of any other writer with the exception of the generally acknowledged monarch of the English Drama. Mr. Gifford most unreasonably objects to this exception and asserts that rhythmical modulation is not in the list of Shakespeare's merits! He thinks that Shakespeare has been overrated; that Beaumont is as sublime, Fletcher as pathetic, and Jonson as nervous; and that *wit* is the only quality by which he is raised above all competitors! Here is a critic that would have pleased Voltaire. It would have been amusing enough if Mr. Gifford had been compelled to give a reason for the faith that was in him. He would have afforded a strong illustration of the absurdity and presumption of a mere satirist—an acute fault-finder—

"A word-catcher that lives on syllables,"

attempting to take the measure of such a gigantic mind as that of Shakespeare. It is not difficult to understand why a critic who counts syllables upon his fingers should prefer the verse of

Massinger to that of Shakespeare. It is more uniformly smooth, correct, and regular. But it has nothing of the freedom, the variety and expression that characterize the voice of

> "Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warbling his native wood-notes wild."

I wish not to underrate the real merit of Massinger's versification. The march of his verse is noble and majestic, and his diction is singularly pure and perspicuous. The latter has quite a modern air, though written two hundred years ago. Perhaps both his metre and his diction are preferable to those of Jonson; but in neither respect does he equal Shakespeare. For though Massinger's language and metre have fewer faults, they have also incomparably fewer beauties, and the beauties very rarely indeed compete with those of the Prince of Dramatic Poets. They have not the same irresistible enchantment. The anticipated tones of Massinger always satisfy, but never surprize or ravish us. But the wild music of Shakespeare is like that of the Æolian harp touched by the wandering breeze. It reminds us of the music of the genius, who, in the habit of a shepherd, appeared before Mirza on the hills of Bagdad. He had a little musical instrument in his hand. As Mirza looked towards him, the genius applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. "*The sound of it*," says Mirza, "*was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from any thing I had ever heard.*" We may describe the enchanting melody of Shakespeare's softer passages in his own delightful words—

> "O it comes o'er the ear, like the sweet South
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

Coleridge once remarked, that he thought he might possibly catch the tone and diction of Milton, but that Shakespeare was absolutely inimitable. This was a very just and discriminating observation. We need be under no apprehension that the music

of Shakespeare will ever pall upon the ear in consequence of its frequent repetition by a servile flock of mocking birds. It will never be said of him, as it was said of Pope, that he

> "Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler had his tune by heart."

The only superiority to Shakespeare that can be discovered in Massinger, is in the greater general clearness and more sustained dignity of his language, and in the judicious abstinence from those puns and quibbles which so unhappily deform the pages of a writer who would otherwise be almost too perfect for humanity.

> "Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
> Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."

The texture of Shakespeare's composition is often most vexatiously involved, and many of his passages are riddles still unsolved by the most patient and clear-headed of his commentators. These are his weightiest sins, and every school-boy can point them out for reprobation; but, as it is hardly necessary to observe, they are redeemed by a galaxy of beauties that may be sought in vain in any other region of the world of literature.

Massinger has comparatively few of those fine and unaffected strokes of nature, for which Shakespeare is so remarkable. The "*What man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows,*" addressed to Macduff when he receives the afflicting intelligence of the destruction of his family, and endeavours to suppress and conceal his agony;—the single exclamation, "*Ah!*" in Othello, when a lightning-flash of jealousy first breaks upon the Moor's tempestuous soul;—his "*Not a jot, not a jot,*" when Iago observes that he is moved;—the "*Pray you undo this button,*" of Lear when his heart swells almost to bursting;—and a thousand other simple but most expressive touches of a similar kind, are amongst the truly characteristic excellencies of Shakespeare and are never to be found in the stately lines of Massinger. But yet, if we

compare Massinger with the Dramatic writers of the present day, in whom shall we find his equal? The golden age of the Drama has passed away. Our present poets can paint the moods of their own minds and can write dramatic poems, but not plays. Their mirrors reflect themselves alone. They do not hold them up to nature and give the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure.

In reviewing the characters in this play, one cannot help wondering that Gifford, notwithstanding his narrow views in criticism, should not have seen the immeasurable inferiority of Massinger to Shakespeare in all the higher attributes of genius. But the critic appears to have been so taken up with the regularity of Massinger's plots, the accuracy of his metre and the purity of his diction, that he overlooked every consideration of a weightier and nobler nature, If in Shakespeare there are greater faults of style, there are far fewer errors of delineation, and in the highest sense of the word, he was a more correct writer than either Massinger himself, or the learned and laborious Jonson. The faults of Shakespeare are errors of taste, and not defects of genius. Where the heart is to be touched or the imagination kindled, he rarely fails. Massinger had an intellect of great force; but, like Dryden, he had no power over the pathetic. Even his great eloquence, his most characteristic merit, is the eloquence of the mind, and not the heart.

It was more than once urged against Shakespeare by his competitors as a weighty objection, that "nature was all his art." It would have served these writers justly if he had retorted that art was all their nature. And, if rightly qualified, there would have been considerable truth in the criticism on both sides.

AN ADDRESS TO SLEEP.

Oh ! gentle Sleep !
Bring thy most soothing dream
To calm my spirit now ;
And thy soft tresses steep
In Lethe's silent stream
To lave my burning brow !

Oh ! faithless maid !
To fly when grief appears,
And the fevered form is laid
On a bed bedew'd with tears !

Alas ! in happier hours,
When Peace, thy bridal-maid,
Hath led thee to the secret shade,
Where verdant boughs were twined
O'er gorgeous summer flowers,
Thou wert not so unkind !

Farewell ! a brief farewell !
Relenting Fate is nigh,
For swiftly speeds the welcome night,
When Death, with unresisted might,
Shall make thee haunt the silent cell
Where this worn frame shall lie !

ON THE EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Some of the admirers of *Orientalism* have battled with more ability than success in favor of the vernacular, in preference to the English language, as a means of communicating the literature and science of the West to the people of India. They venture to compare it with the Latin and the English, and even roundly assert that the Bengali is quite as rich and expressive as either of those languages. It is added that all the subtle distinctions of metaphysics may be taught in Bengali quite as well as in English. How a language which has scarcely any literature at all can be compared for copiousness, flexibility and precision, to a language that has been cultivated for ages by the greatest poets, orators, and philosophers which the world has known, is a riddle that it would be difficult to solve. Bengali compared to English is as lax and meagre, as are almost all other ancient languages compared with Greek. " The obstacles," says Sir James Mackintosh, (in the introduction to his View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy,) " which stood in the way of Lucretius and Cicero, when they began to translate the subtle philosophy of Greece into their narrow and barren tongue, are always felt by the philosopher, when he struggles to express, with the necessary discrimination, his abstruse reasoning in words which, though those of his own language, he must take from the mouths of persons to whom his distinctions would be without a meaning." If the Latin compared with the Greek is a " narrow and barren

tongue," the same may be said of the Bengali when compared with the Latin, and with equal justice when compared with the English; for the latter has been so vastly improved by careful cultivation, by the taste and genius of a host of native writers, and by the judicious introduction of expressive foreign words, that, perhaps, no other living language may be compared with it for force, fertility and exactness. And yet this language, with all its excellencies, is not even now entirely fitted for the use of the metaphysician, and perhaps never will be. Nothing is more common amongst our authors than the most pathetic complaints respecting the imperfections of the language. Professor Stewart, amongst other eminent metaphysicians, has spoken of the perplexing obscurity, in which mental philosophy has been involved by the vagueness and ambiguity of words. If so comparatively rich and flexible a language as ours, is often found inadequate to express the subtler metaphysical distinctions, how unreasonable is it to imagine that such a language as the Bengali, in its present state, can be successfully devoted to such a purpose! It would take several centuries to bring it to a state of copiousness and refinement.

The obstacles in the way of introducing the English language to the people of India, have been greatly exaggerated by the *Orientalists.* If there were but one spoken and written language in all India, the objection to the introduction of the English language would seem more plausible; but when we consider the multiplicity of languages and characters already in use amongst the natives, it seems perfectly ridiculous to talk of the difficulty of introducing a foreign tongue. Are not the Arabic and Persian, foreign languages? Is not the greater part of the learning of the East embodied in the Sanscrit? Would it be a whit more difficult or less useful to teach the living English than the dead Sanscrit? Is the Roman character more hieroglyphycal or less distinct than the Nagree?

Some of our most ardent *Orientalists* insist upon the necessity of translating the productions of the Western writers into Arabic or Sanscrit, and when they carried every thing before them in the councils of the Committee of Public Instruction, they devoted no less a sum than 65,000 rupees to remunerate Doctor Tytler for the translation into Arabic of six books—five of them of a medical character, and one of a mathematical! Luckily for the youth of India, Lord William Bentinck had sense and decision enough to put a sudden stop to this preposterous waste of toil and money, and since that time a most wholesome change has been effected in the entire system of Indian education. We now send out of our colleges hundreds of fine-minded youths who are not only familiar with English words, but with English thoughts and feelings. Instead of the old system of *bribing* boys with a fixed remuneration of some 16 or 20 rupees per mensem to acquire a knowledge of the astronomy of Ptolemy and the medicine of Galen, we have our schools crowded with enthusiastic youths who deem it a precious privilege to be admited upon the payment of a monthly sum*, which, small as it may seem, is often given with difficulty and inconvenience. But yet they willingly and proudly make this pecuniary sacrifice for the sake of an acquaintance not with Ptolemy and Galen, or with the Oriental writers of licentious tales, but with Shakespeare and Milton, and Bacon and Newton, and Addison and Johnson! Even the late Doctor Tytler himself, an indefatigable student in Oriental Literature and a violent opponent of the *Romanizing* system introduced by Sir William Jones, and followed up with so much ardour by Mr. Trevelyan, acknowledges that the English language ought to be "an object, nay, a paramount object, in Native education;" and while he is opposing Mr. Trevelyan's plan of *Anglicizing* the whole literature of India, on account of its supposed difficulty, or rather its supposed impossibility, he admits that the vernacular

* The boys at the Hindu College pay five rupees per mensem.

dialects cannot be thoroughly understood by the natives of India, or used with propriety without a knowledge of their *learned* languages. If, then, amongst the natives of India, all education beyond the most ordinary kind, requires the knowledge of more than one language besides the vernacular, what impropriety or unreasonableness can be imputed to those who desire to supplant such an extra or foreign acquisition as that of Arabic or Sanscrit by the introduction of English? It will hardly be denied by the most bigotted *Orientalist*, that the latter contains nobler treasures of literature and science than any Eastern language.

One would imagine that all mankind would be anxious to get rid as much as possible of the curse of Babel, and would aim at acquiring a uniformity of language; but there are natives of considerable acuteness who yet do not understand how great a blessing would be conferred upon their country by the abolition of the immense variety of dialects which now divide so many millions of their countrymen into different tribes. Nothing would more speedily or more effectually civilize the people of this vast land, and give them political strength, than a uniformity of language. It is the great bond of social union. It would change a thousand tribes into one people. A community of language is a community of thought. And if the people have now to choose a language it is natural to suppose that they would give the preference to that of their more enlightened governors, many of whom, we hope, are quite as anxious to improve the mind of India, as to increase its revenue. When people talk of the extreme difficulty of introducing the English language, they forget that it is not offered to *men* but to *children*. It is not the present but the rising generation upon whom this blessing is to be conferred; and every one knows with what extreme facility a child imbibes a language. The children of European parents in India generally speak English and Hindustani with equal facility. They learn them both simultaneously. And why should not the children

of Indian parents do the same? We will venture to say that, if Government would offer teachers a remunerating salary, instead of the pittance that is now awarded to them, a sufficient number of competent persons would almost instantaneously be found, and if the English language system were pursued with zeal and assiduity, in less than a quarter of a century there would be millions of young natives able to speak and write it with ease and accuracy. It cannot be doubted that it would take a much longer time for the natives to improve any of their own languages than to learn English. The science of the West could not be introduced into the Bengali language without the cultivators of the latter borrowing or inventing the entire nomenclature, and there are delicate shades of thought, and exquisite turns of expression, that could never be transferred into the dialects of the East. The improvement of an imperfect language is a dreadfully slow process whereas the acquisition of a new one, especially by the young, may be effected with the utmost ease and rapidity. If the Government once set earnestly to work upon their present plan, the result will be far more speedy and effective than is generally imagined, even by the majority of the Anglicizers themselves. It is not easy to reckon the good that has already been compassed by the English education bestowed on Indian youths. Many of them, with a most generous and noble zeal, excited by the moral influence of an English education, are in the habit of devoting their leisure hours to the task of communicating to their poorer countrymen the blessings they have themselves received at the hands of Englishmen. The public little know what a vast number of native children are thus receiving gratuitous instruction in English from the alumni and the ex-students of our colleges. We are to add to the effect of this most benevolent practice, the influence of their example and conversation even upon their seniors who have not enjoyed the same advantages. Knowledge spreads like wild-fire.

The *Orientalists* are rejoiced to have Mr. Adam on their side. It must be admitted that if a clear head and strict integrity be entitled to respect, there are not many men in the world who have a better claim to it than Mr. Adam. At the same time, we may take the liberty to observe, that his authority on a question of this nature is not decisive. When he went to Rajshye to make his Education Report, his sentiments betokened "a foregone conclusion." He was already prejudiced in favor of the native languages ; and Mr. Adam is one of those men who combine the most honest intentions with an obstinacy of will that no opposition, however fair and reasonable, can easily subdue. He will grant nothing. He is "predetermined not to give a single sous." Because he discovered that in Rajshye there were more schools for instruction in the vernacular than in the English tongue, he jumped to the conclusion, that the fact affords an index to the disposition of the people, and that we ought to attend to their desires. This is as much as to say that the miserable system of education, if education it can be called, pursued in any semi-barbarous country, should by all means be encouraged, because it is still adopted by as many of the people as have enjoyed little or no intercourse with Europeans. What is to be expected from the ignorant inhabitants of obscure villages in India in which a white face is a wonder ? It is assuredly a wild absurdity to imagine that these simple people can form any conception of the comparative advantages of different systems of education. They are utterly ignorant of the nature of the blessings that an English education would confer. If it be true, that they desire an Indian education in preference to an English one, we hope the British Government will not act the part of Jupiter, and curse its petitioners by granting their foolish prayers. Let us not be guided by the blind. The natives in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, and other large cities, have had their mental vision couched. The filmy curtain has been drawn aside, and they can distinguish good

from evil. These men acknowledge the vast advantages of a study of the English language, and they eagerly send their children to our colleges. The youths themselves voraciously devour the mental treat that we place before them. Their appetite for European literature and science is so intense, that no ordinary exertions on the part of their teachers can keep pace with their desires. At the opening of the Hooghly College, there were no less than fifteen hundred native boys amongst the candidates for admission. The Hindoo College is always as full as it can hold of students who *pay* for their education. Is not this a stronger argument in favor of the English language, than can be drawn in favor of the vernacular dialects from the customs of ignorant villagers, who are guided solely by the example of their forefathers ?

We are sorry to see some of the *Orientalists* quoting with approbation the vulgar absurdities of Cobbett upon the subject of the learned languages. Cobbett wrote with clearness and vigour upon local or temporary topics, but he knew nothing of general principles, and was a very miserable philosopher. The learned languages are not taught for the words alone, but for the thoughts with which the words are indissolubly connected. The signs of thought cannot be studied without familiarizing the student with what they stand for. We are free to confess that somewhat too much time is devoted at our Colleges in England to the acquisition of Greek and Latin to the neglect of our mother tongue. If the English were a barbarous and barren language, there would be a fair excuse for such expenditure of time and labour; but as it is unquestionably enriched with high, and elegant, and varied learning, it is injudicious to pay less attention to our own living tongue than to the dead languages of foreign countries. Many a tolerable Greek and Latin scholar is utterly ignorant of the great authors of his own country, and is unable to write or speak his own language with grammatical propriety. But while we condemn this absurd preference of other languages to our own, we

are by no means disposed to second the opinions of those who think, that in reading the works of the great ancient authors, a boy is learning words alone. We cannot learn words alone. It is impossible to learn words without making ourselves in some degree acquainted with the objects of which they are the symbols. In fact, as it has often been observed, true words are things, and the only things too, that last for ever! Temples, and towers, and cities and their inhabitants pass away, but written words remain. The works of Homer and Hesiod exist in words, as the mind exists in conjunction with the body. Separation is death. Dr. Joseph Warton was right enough in his strictures on a couplet of Pope, in which the sentiment of Cobbett is anticipated. "To read," (says he, with the generous enthusiasm of a scholar,) "to read, to interpret, to translate the best poets, orators and historians, of the best ages; that is, those authors 'that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, most examples of virtue and integrity, and most materials for conversation,' cannot be called confining youth to words alone, and keeping them out of the way of real knowledge."

It was the opinion also of a far higher authority, the clear and lofty minded Milton, that "*if passages from the heroic poems, orations and tragedies of the ancients were solemnly pronounced, with right accent and grace, they would endue the scholars even with the spirit and vigour of Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides or Sophocles**."

Any time that could be spared from the study of our own authors might be devoted by our English youth with great advantage to the ancients; and if the field of English lore were less fertile than it is, we should hardly object even to the present disproportionate attention to the literature of Greece and Rome. The case is very different with the Bengali and the English. The most strenuous advocates for the Bengali do not venture to

* The same may be said of the perusal of Shakespeare and Lord Bacon by the young natives of India.

deny that there is an infinitely larger quantity of noble materials for the food of the mind in the language of England. But they imagine that they can transfer with ease and rapidity the best portion of this intellectual wealth into the vernacular, through the medium of translation. There cannot be a more deplorable mistake. A glance at our English translations of the works of the ancients would suffice to convince any reasonable man of the excessive difficulty of transferring the literature of one language into that of another, even where there is some congeniality between the languages of the original and the translation. Good English scholars, acquainted with the ancients only through English versions, are at a loss how to recognize the justice of those fervid praises that have been lavished through so many ages and in so many different lands upon the authors of Greece and Rome. But the learned have no difficulty in furnishing a solution of the mystery. They tell us that the spirit of the great authors, who have become immortal heirs of fame, has evaporated entirely in the process of translation.

One of the *Orientalists* observes, that Pope's translation of Homer is a master-piece, and must rank among English Epics next to Paradise Lost. If Pope had written nothing besides this translation or rather paraphrase of Homer, his rank as a genuine poet would have been far lower than it now is. The truth is, that all English critics at present concur in condemning it. The simple and sublime old bard is dressed like a modern coxcomb. "It is a pretty poem," said Bentley to Pope, who had urgently pressed for his opinion of his translation, "but you must not call it Homer." If the entire spirit and character of ancient authors is so changed by translators of skill and genius, who have a copious and flexible language at their command, we must expect a still greater loss of original spirit in the transfusion of ideas from English into Bengali. The late Dr. Tytler used to say that nothing could be more con-

temptible than the attempts hitherto made to transfer our literature into the vernacular, and though he himself was a man of very great ability and learning, we may fairly express a doubt whether his own Arabic translations were not better adapted to furnish food for mirth to those acquainted with the original language, than the means of instruction to the majority of native students.

Our opponents acknowledge, that if the vernacular dialects be the exclusive means of cultivation, then English poetry, from the difficulty of translation, must be given up altogether. And yet our poetry is by no means an insignificant or useless portion of English Literature. When we speak of British genius, amongst the very first names that start up in our memory and demand our gratitude and admiration, are those of Shakespeare and Milton ! The influence of the writings of such men upon the intellectual character of a nation, is as vast as it is undefinable. Shakespeare's magical creations have become fixtures in the minds of his countrymen, and his finer thoughts and axioms are as familiar in our mouths as household words. The editor of a native paper lays the flattering unction to his soul that his countrymen are richer in poetical genius than the English, in spite of our Chaucer and Spencer and Shakespeare and Milton ! "*Every body knows,*" says he, "*that we, the inhabitants of this sunny clime, have poetry in greater abundance than the inhabitants of the bleak regions of England, and other polar countries.*" We confess that we are amongst the *no bodies,* if *every body* is of this opinion. If we could be convinced that there was so much glorious poetry in the vernacular, and that the natives could do so well without ours, we should be less disposed to advocate the English ; for there is no doubt that mere science could be transferred into any language with more ease and success than poetry*. We have always had a notion, however,

* Let us communicate as much of our scientific knowledge as we can ; but at the same time we should always remember that science alone ought not to

that the all-sidedness of mind, and the profound and philosophical knowledge of the human heart displayed by Shakespeare, and the sublime morality and lofty imagination of Milton, were immeasurably beyond the reach of Indian poets, who were little better, in our estimation, than dealers in miscellaneous stores of tears and smiles, clouds and sunbeams, and gems and flowers. The general impression of all other nations regarding the poetry of the East, is extremely unfavorable. The poetry of Indian Bards is looked upon as a glittering gewgaw. It is bespangled like a coronation robe. There can be no great poetry where there is no simplicity of taste or purity of feeling. The greatest poet that the world ever knew was remarkable for the naked grandeur of his style, and Milton, who does not stand much below him was also distinguished for a chaste sublimity. His poetry is often sculptural and colourless. But, perhaps, our opponents do not mean to institute a comparison between the poetry of India and that of England in reference to *quality*, so much as in point of *quantity*. If this be their intention, we have no wish to disturb their complacency.

With respect even to prose literature, there is scarcely a book that we can mention, that would not greatly suffer by a translation into Bengali. Style is as much a part of an author as the mortal frame is a part of our strangely compounded being. Even the *Orientalists* will acknowledge that the glorious thoughts of Milton, expressed with such extraordinary force, would lose more than half their effect in any other diction. We are of opinion that it would be the same with the prose writings of our moralists. There is an insinuating grace in the manner of Addison and Goldsmith, that could only be imitated to perfection by kindred genius and in the same language. But in such a language as the Bengali,

be our sole or even chief object in the education of the natives. It is of paramount importance that we should *raise the moral tone of their minds*; a desire for the acquisition of science and general knowledge must necessarily follow.

the charm could never be preserved by even greater skill and ingenuity than are displayed in the original. Such writers make morality enchanting.

"Truth from *their* lips prevails with double sway."

It is astonishing how little novelty of thought is to be found in any age or country in the writings of the most eminent moralists and philosophers. New truths are rare, and the human heart remains unchanged. It is the wondrous felicity with which great writers place old truths in a new light, and the grace, clearness or force of their style, that raises our admiration and renders them so useful to mankind. We are told of the difficulty of procuring schoolmasters; but this difficulty is trifling, indeed, when compared with that of procuring competent translators*.

When we take all these considerations into a fair account, it is not difficult to come to a conclusion upon the main subject of the present article. We are thoroughly convinced, that by instructing native children in the English language (which in the dawn of their intellects is an easy attainment), we put into their hands the golden key of a vast treasury of precious knowledge that they would never gain access to by any other means. For their present feeble and defective language (which still, however, they are not obliged wholly to neglect) we give them an instrument for the use of their minds that is in a state of comparative perfection; and we expedite their passage in the road to knowledge, at a rate that will cause the rising generation to make greater progress in twenty years, than could be effected through the medium of the vernacular languages in a century.

* Perhaps the most convincing argument in favor of native education through the medium of the English tongue, is a reference to the character and accomplishments of some of those young men who have passed through the Hindu College. Their minds are infinitely more elevated and more robust than those of their countrymen in general, and they talk and think and act like well educated Europeans; they read Bacon and Shakespeare and Johnson and Addison with delight, and have a sense of the true and the beautiful, which could never be acquired from oriental literature alone, of which the general character is confessedly feeble and impure.

THEY CALL ME COLD AND PROUD.

THEY call me cold and proud,
Because my lip and brow
Amid the mirthful crowd
No kindred mirth avow ;
But, oh ! nor look nor language e'er reveal
How much the sad can love, the lonely feel !

I seek affection's smile,
But vainly gaze around,
For fickleness and guile
In fairest forms are found ;—
Sad doubts of human truth my dreams control,
And leave an awful solitude of soul.

The peopled earth appears
As drear as deserts wide,
My gloominess and tears
The stern and gay deride ;—
Alas ! life's heartless mockeries who can bear,
When grief is dumb, and deep thought brings despair ?

RURAL HAPPINESS.

(FROM VIRGIL'S GEORGICS, BOOK II.)

Ah ! happy Swains ! If they their bliss but knew,
Whom, far from boisterous war, Earth's bosom true
With easy food supplies. If they behold
No lofty dome its gorgeous gates unfold
And pour at morn from all its chambers wide
Of flattering visitants the mighty tide :
Nor gaze on beauteous columns richly wrought,
Or tissued robes, or busts from Corinth brought ;
Nor their white wool with Tyrian poison soil,
Nor taint with Cassia's bark their native oil :
Yet peace is theirs ; a life true bliss that yields ;
And various wealth ; leisure mid ample fields,
Grottoes, and living lakes, and vallies green,
And lowing herds ; and 'neath a sylvan screen
Delicious slumbers. There the lawn and cave
With beasts of chace abound. The young ne'er crave
A prouder lot ; their patient toil is cheered ;
Their gods are worshipped, and their sires revered ;
And there, when Justice passed from earth away,
She left the latest traces of her sway.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF POETRY.

SINCE the publication of the first edition of the *Literary Leaves*, I have been favored with a communication from a celebrated poet, in which he has made some highly interesting remarks suggested by an article on Poetry and Utilitarianism which is reprinted at page 55 of the present volume. They are so confirmatory of my own views, that I cannot resist the temptation to make some public use of them. As the name of the writer is suppressed I feel assured, from what I know of his character, that he will readily excuse the liberty I take in venturing to offer my readers the following extract from his most kind and acceptable letter.

" The vindication of poetry against utilitarianism particularly deserves commendation, at a time when 'push-pin,' in every thing connected with literature is superseding 'poetry,'—and the '*utile*' in its lowest sense is preferred to the '*dulce*' in its highest. I have myself from time to time in public and in private declaimed not a little against this polished barbarism, this last refinement of excessive civilization, by which all language is to be finally converted into the technical expression of ideas purely abstract, and employed for purposes merely practical,—in the acquisition of sordid wealth and creature-comforts, or in the indulgence of speculations that lead from doubt to doubt on things spiritual, and end in nothing if they end in anything,—that is a contradiction, but it suits the subject, where every thing contradicts every thing, and the mind questioning at length its own existence resolves itself into a series of effects, whether they be *called* thoughts and sensations, from one great laboratory of causes,—the animal brain, and which, whether they *be* thoughts or sensations only, are disconnected, though as quickly successive, as the sparks that are generated and instantly extinguished, by the collision of flint and steel. I must break off from this rhapsodical invective, by adding that the prevalence of utilitarianism will not only disenchant the world of all that is poetical and picturesque in it, but will neutralize all that is noble and disinterested in human action by removing the sanctions of eternity from the conscience,

and gradually obliterating the sense of reponsibility to another and higher tribunal than the earth; without which it is hard to conceive how any man of like passions with ourselves, can be virtuous from principle in the hour of temptation when he can sin to advantage and with impunity. 'The greatest good to the greatest number,' the favorite maxim of this class of philosophers, can never be accomplished by any code of laws or system of morals which deals with man, whether singly or in society, as of the 'earth earthy,' without the hope of immortality, and the belief of a judgment to come according to which a state of existence far more important to him than the present will be determined. Utilitarianism, as it is preached and practised, whatever its pretensions may be, is adapted only to the things of time and sense, so far as these can be adapted to the desires and necessities of rational beings with brute destinies, gifted with faculties capable of infinite expansion, yet limited to three score years and ten for their development, and then going to the grave with a surplus of intellect unemployed which might serve to carry them through every inhabited orb in the universe, were that the soul's progress after the death of the body, and prepared for all the exercises and enjoyments of heaven itself to eternity, when soul and body shall be reunited, as we are taught by Revelation to expect they will be. No more; —you will guess at the meaning of the foregoing verbiage, if I have failed to make it intelligible —

There is unquestionably a depreciatory opinion respecting the nature of poetry very prevalent, not only amongst ignorant or prejudiced persons, but even amongst many well educated men who pretend to some refinement of taste and feeling. It is lamentable, indeed, after so much has been written upon the subject of poetry by some of the ablest critics in the world, that it should be yet so little understood. This perhaps partly arises from the difficulty of making a distinction in common parlance between the words *poetry* and *metre,* though a very little thought is sufficient to convince a man of any discrimination that these are by no means synonymous or convertible expressions. Every one understands the clear distinction between *prose* and *verse,* which are always placed in opposition, but it is by no means so universally perceived that *verse* is not necessarily *poetry.* Coleridge has rightly explained that *poetry* is not the proper antithesis to *prose,* but to *science.* There is, nevertheless, as marked a difference between mere metre and true poetry, as between true

poetry and a prose work on a scientific subject. Sometimes, however, there may be poetry in prose, as sometimes there may be none in metre.

If we look into the dictionaries for a definition of poetry we shall find that it is "a metrical composition;—the art or practice of writing poems;" and this is all that the generality of thoughtless people seem to have learned about it. It has often happened that even those who ought to know better have had the same limited conception of its nature. And yet Aristotle has affirmed that "poetry is a more philosophical and excellent thing, than history; for poetry is conversant about *general* truth; history, about *particular**;" and Lord Bacon has said that it is "a capital part of learning," and that it "has something *divine* in it." It is strange, indeed, that people should listen attentively to such definitions as these, and still confound poetry with metre. Is there anything "*divine*" in the art of measuring syllables? or can Aristotle have considered a mere *versifier* a more useful and noble writer than an *historian?* If poetry were so limited and mean a thing, as the Utilitarians would have us suppose it, how is it that the attempt to reduce it to a definition has puzzled so many strong and subtle intellects? Poetry embraces the whole moral and material world. It is as illimitable as the soul of man. That soul is not more distinct in its nature from its clay receptacle, than is the spirit of poetry from the form in which it is embodied. If we speak of poetry merely as an *art*, we may limit it to the imitation of moral and external nature, the poet using words as a painter uses colours. But if we go beyond this, and endeavour to define that peculiar and rare faculty or endowment which enables the poet to give life to inanimate things, and to feel more intensely than other men the loveliness or grandeur of the universe, or if we attempt to analyse the *poetical* or to fix its bounds, we

* Aristotle's Treatise of Poetry; Twining's Translation.

soon discover that the utmost human ingenuity may be taxed in vain. The faculty of mind which the poet most exerts is that of the imagination; and assuredly nothing in life is more directly allied to the highest and purest exertions of the noblest imagination than poetry, and this fact alone is a sufficient evidence of its loftiness, and in a high and liberal sense of the word, of its *utility*. "The faculty of imagination," says Dugald Stewart, "is the great spring of human activity, and the principal source of human improvement. Destroy that faculty, and the condition of man will be as stationary as that of the brutes."

To limit *utility*, as many of our modern philosophers have done, to material objects and the sciences that administer to the comforts and conveniences of corporeal life, is to degrade our human nature, which in reality is far more nearly allied to a higher order of existence than such reasoners would seem to imply. It is not always quite clear that the sciences which lessen human labour or the sensual luxuries procurable by wealth, have contributed very materially to the true happiness of mankind. The pleasures which all external things can give are speedily exhausted. We soon get accustomed to any external or corporeal advantage derived from wealth or science, and when its novelty is gone, we regard that which was once an addition to our pleasures as no more than the supply of a necessity, We should feel the want of it far more than we appreciate its possession. But those arts which kindle the imagination and touch the feelings—which elevate and refine our spiritual nature, and which increase our sensibilities, are more immediately conversant with the elements of permanent delight. We are not so soon satiated with beautiful images and noble sentiments as with the sensual luxuries of life. In the intellectual banquet the appetite grows with what it feeds on. The more we dwell upon the beauty and sublimity of the visible world, the more we see to love and to admire and the more capable we become of that high enjoyment. We owe it to the great invention

of Steam that we can travel from one place to another with greater speed than our ancestors, but if we go over the same ground with greater rapidity, is it quite certain that we travel with much lighter hearts or more elevated minds? And of what *utility* is anything in the world of matter or of spirit, except in proportion as it bears a remote or immediate reference to the *heart* and *mind* of man?

Poetry can supply us with neither sailing ships nor steamers, nor rail-roads, nor patent umbrellas, nor water-proof India-rubber garments; but it can give us elevated conceptions, and make us relish with a double zest, those unutterably lovely and glorious objects, with which the great Creator of the universe has surrounded us on every side. The clear bright mirror of a gifted poet's soul, when it reflects the sun, and the moon, and the stars, the richly painted fields and the radiant rivers, communicates to the mass of his fellow-creatures a far deeper sense of nature's loveliness than they obtain through their own mere fleshly vision. The herd of literal-minded men pass by the miracles of God's own hand with less observation than they bestow upon the meanest productions of human art. But every true poet can exclaim with Wordsworth—

> To me the meanest, simplest, flowers that blow,
> Do raise up thoughts that lie too deep for tears.

Nor of any genuine lover of poetry can it be said that "nature never found the way into his heart," or that

> In vain through every changeful year,
> Did nature lead him as before;
> A primrose by a river's brim
> *A yellow primrose was to him,*
> *And it was nothing more.*

God did not mean us to be indifferent to the unspeakable charms that he has scattered around us with so lavish a hand; and, well has it been said, that Poets are Nature's priests; for

they in an especial manner, impress upon their fellow-men the necessity of cultivating a due sense of the goodness of that mighty and beneficent Being, who has still suffered the earth we tread on to retain so much of the air of Paradise.

Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler hopes and nobler cares—
The POETS, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight in endless lays!

It is *they* who teach us when "sensual pleasures cloy,"

To fill the languid pulse with finer joy

It is *they* who appeal to us with so much earnestness and power to quit occasionally the grovelling and sordid cares of life for a sacred communion with Nature, and who bid us look with a reverential eye upon her countless glories It is *they* who revive in the man of the world a due sense of his original and nobler nature, and make him ashamed of wholly sacrificing to sordid pursuits those higher and more innocent delights which God has granted to those who are willing to admire the productions of his hand. It is *they* who ask him—

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves and garniture of fields,
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven—
Oh! how canst thou renounce and hope to be forgiven?

Perhaps there are few minds raised above the coldest and coarsest considerations, that have not received in occasional distresses a holy consolation breathed from the face of nature, and certainly every worthy reader of poetry must have felt his sensibilities and his taste increased by a familiarity with descriptions from the pen of those who

Have looked on nature with a poet's eye.

There is a part of a stanza in Thomson's "Castle of Indolence," that so strongly expresses the independent pleasure derived from Nature in despite of Fortune, that it has assuredly been repeated by thousands of fine-minded enthusiasts, with a most cordial concurrence of sentiment, and with irrepressible delight.

> I care not, Fortune, what you me deny,
> You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
> Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
> You cannot bar my constant feet to trace,
> The woods and lawns by living streams at eve

And is that art *useless* which makes us so peculiarly alive to the charms of Nature? But it is not the external universe alone that the poet brings to the else too sluggish observation of mankind He not only shows us the wonders of God in material things and in the lower world, but he lifts up the curtain of the far more mysterious and mighty mechanism of the human heart, and reads us the most beautiful and impressive moral lessons;—he charms us with the fairest examples of virtue, or frightens us from sin by painting it in its truest colours *Hamlet* and *Lear*, and *Macbeth* and *Othello, and Timon of Athens*, are pictures of humanity that assist us to understand our inner nature, and that yield us more positive instruction than the finest moral lecture that philosopher ever uttered.

And is poetry then—the question cannot be too often repeated,—an idle and useless amusement? Let us look at true poetry, from what point of view we please, and we need not hesitate to pronounce that the *Utilitarians* who can speak of it with contempt, must be utterly ignorant of its nature. To confound it with mere verse is a piece of silliness and a deficiency of insight that in this boasted age of education ought to be considered inexcusable in a school-boy. When Thomas Campbell characterized the life of Sir Philip Sydney as *poetry put into action*, and when Byron in a fine enthusiasm called the stars the *poetry of heaven*,

[illegible] of the nature of poetry [illegible] and Mr. Mill. If the Utilitarians openly [illegible] antipathy to all that is beautiful or sublime, [illegible] to poetry would be more intelligible—for there is [illegible] wide universe that is either beautiful or sublime, [illegible] When we elevate ourselves above the literal, [illegible] the sordid, we enter the pure atmosphere of poetry. [illegible] the ground cannot be expected to appreciate [illegible] of a more etherial region.

THE END.